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CITY CENTRES OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

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BY

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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

In the following pages an attempt has been made to treat certain aspects of the history of the early Church topographically, as it has been found from experience in actual teaching that this method of presenting and grouping the subject is unusually suggestive and convenient. Eight cities, viz. Jerusalem, Ephesus, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Edessa, Carthage, and Rome, together with the two island communities of Iona and Lindisfarne, have been selected as representative centres of the various normal types of Christianity which appeared in the Church during the first few centuries of its existence. The abnormal or heretical types would require a separate volume for themselves.

The prominent features and characteristic tendencies of the Churches connected with these places have been outlined and their distinctive contributions to the life and thought, the doctrine and practice, of Christendom have been particularly described.

As a rule, the facts have been selected with a view to making these distinctive features stand out clearly, while other matters connected with the

respective cities and churches have perforce received somewhat less attention. It is quite possible, therefore, that some of the dangers of broad generalisation have not been altogether escaped. The treatment of the several Churches has not been arbitrarily uniform, and some have naturally required to be dealt with more fully than others. As a rule, however, in each case some of the following points have been kept in view :

1. The special characteristics of the city itself. Following the example of Sir William Ramsay in his *Letters to the Seven Churches*, I have endeavoured, where possible, to trace corresponding features between city and Church, and to show how some, at least, of the notable tendencies of the Church were inherited from the parent city.

2. The beginnings of Christianity in the city.

3. Sketches of a few of the more outstanding and typical members of the Church ; incidentally also the broad outline of the Church's history.

4. The attitude of the Church towards heathenism generally, and sometimes its relation to the propagation of the gospel.

5. Its attitude towards the Scriptures with regard to their study and interpretation.

6. And, lastly, its special contributions to Christian doctrine and discipline ; or, more generally, its particular theological and ecclesiastical tendencies.

The substance of these chapters has already

been delivered as a course of lectures to students who had hitherto read little or no Church history. I have retained in some degree the lecture form, and have been careful, as in the original lectures, not to assume any previous knowledge of the subject on the part of the reader. I have, likewise, endeavoured to be explanatory throughout, and have made no attempt at exhaustive treatment of the subjects entered upon.

I can make no claim to any original work in the exact sense of the term, although I have as a rule consulted the original sources. Most of my information is derived, and probably nearly everything of value in thought and expression is echoed, from a host of other writers. Detailed acknowledgment of my obligations would therefore be almost impossible, and certainly tedious.

I would, however, desire to record my indebtedness to my early teachers in Church History, Professors John Gibb and H. M. Gwatkin, to whom I owe much, and especially to the late Rev. Forbes Robinson, M.A.

My grateful thanks are due to the Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., but for whom this book would not have been attempted, to Dr. Rendel Harris, and the Rev. W. Fearon Halliday, M.A., for valuable help and suggestions, and to my wife for her assistance in compiling the Index.

ROBERT A. AYTOUN.

WOODBROOKE, BIRMINGHAM.

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CHAPTER I

JERUSALEM

THE first city to be studied in connection with the origin and growth of the Christian Church is naturally Jerusalem, the ancient capital of Judea and the headquarters of the worship of Jehovah which prepared the way for the religion of Jesus Christ.

Although Jerusalem had been the centre of Judaism from which Christianity sprang, it was not destined to hold a similar place in Christendom. It was, it is true, the birthplace and the first home of the Christian Church; but very soon the Church there ceased to be a force of much importance in the Christian world at large.

The Jerusalem Church represented, as was quite natural, the Jewish type of Christianity. Most of its members, if not all, were circumcised Jews, who continued to a large extent in their ancient faith and practices, in so far as these seemed to them in accord with the teaching of Jesus. Most of them were genuine Christians, it is true, ready to lay down their lives or suffer persecution for the faith of the risen Master; but, nevertheless, their type

of Christianity was a reformed Judaism, and to them it was through Judaism that the normal way to salvation and to Christianity lay.

In spite of the opposition of the Sanhedrin to the Gospel, the Jerusalem Christians were mostly loyal and orthodox Jews, and their endeavour at first was to prove that the religion of Jesus, which they knew to be true, was not subversive of the teaching of Moses and the Prophets. There was too much of the true spirit of Christ in their midst for them to offer, as a Church, any positive opposition to the movement which led to the inclusion of the Gentiles as such into the Church of Christ.

Nevertheless, the spirit of Jerusalem and of its ancient worship was too strong in its conservatism and exclusiveness for the Church there, and at most it only permitted the work among the Gentiles. Even the leaders of the Church, who were considerably more broad-minded than the rank and file, seem to have been nervous and anxious lest a wider conception of the scope and freedom of Christianity should even seem to infringe upon the claims of their ancestral religion. (Acts xxi. 17 *seq.*)

The universality of the Christ and of His gospel was never grasped as an essential and living fact; and, as the inevitable result, the original Mother-church drifted into a backwater and gradually became of little or no account, many of its members reverting to Judaism.

We find the main history of the Jerusalem Church in its early and most influential days portrayed in Acts. In the beginning, after the Day of Pentecost, it flourished exceedingly, in spite of persecution from the chief priests and from Herod the King.

As it was the Mother-church and the headquarters of the apostles, the other Christian communities, as they gradually began to arise in various towns and cities far and near, looked to it naturally for guidance. It was to the Jerusalem Church that the vital question of the admittance of the Gentiles into Christian fellowship was brought for decision. And there the problem was discussed and decided by a conference presided over by James, the brother of our Lord (Acts xv.).

And not only did distant Churches appeal to the authority of the Mother-church, but we find them also contributing to her needs from time to time by generous gifts of money to show their sympathy and loyalty. Like their Master, most of its members seem to have belonged to the poorer classes. Their poverty, which was probably partly of necessity and partly from choice, was well known the world over.

It is interesting to note, in connection with this, that this Church had the honour to be the first community which attempted to solve the economic problem of poverty by instituting a kind of community of goods. "And all that believed had all

things in common, and sold their possessions and goods and shared them with all as every man had need" (Acts ii. 44–5). "Neither said any that aught of the things which he possessed were his own, but they had all things in common. . . . As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts iv. 32–5). We hear no more of this experiment after the very beginning of things, and subsequent happenings seem to indicate that it was soon dropped. Probably it was found to be impracticable, owing to the rapid growth of the Church. Nevertheless, it was a brave and splendid attempt, and greatly to the honour of the Church which made it.

A more successful and permanent feature of this Church's life was its systematic effort to provide for the needs of its widows and orphans, and its recognition of its obligations to the needy and helpless.[1] In this it has been the pioneer of some of the best and noblest work of the Christian Church at large. The Jerusalem Church may have been parochial and narrow in its outlook, but it was certainly distinguished in its early days by its "practical" Christianity. It was a "Martha" among the Churches. It was a "doer" if not always a "hearer" of the "Word."

[1] *Cf.* Acts vi.

The most notable member of the Church at this stage of its existence was James, the brother of our Lord. At first, along with Peter and John, and later by himself alone, he guided the affairs of the Jerusalem Christians, as may be seen both in the Acts and Paul's Epistles. He seems to have been a prudent and cautious administrator, and a tactful and brave leader. Even St. Paul, though carefully claiming independence, treated him with marked deference and respect. James bravely kept to his post for about a quarter of a century, though the situation in Jerusalem was becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous. He was esteemed a saint by the people, by Christians and Jews alike. Hegesippus, the Christian historian, writing A.D. *c.* 160, describes him thus: "James, the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of his name, was surnamed the Just by all. . . . This apostle (*sic*) was consecrated from his birth. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. [There is no trace of this asceticism in the biblical account of him.] . . . He alone was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. . . . He was in the habit of entering the Temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, interceding for forgiveness for the people; so that his knees became hard as camels' knees, through his habitual supplication and kneeling before God."[1] An exemplary Jew and

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* ii. 23.

a man universally respected for his saintly character, if any one could have reconciled the Jews to the idea of Christianity it would have been James. But even he failed finally, and, like his divine Brother and Master, was rejected and delivered up to the chief priests and unjustly condemned to death on a false charge. The probable date of his death is A.D. *c.* 62.[1] Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to the circumstances in the following terms :

"During the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor, Albinus, the high-priest, Ananias, the younger, being of a rash and daring spirit, and inclined, like the Sadducees in general, to severity and punishing, brought to trial James, the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ, and some others before the Court of the Sanhedrin, and, having charged them with breaking the laws, delivered them over to be stoned. The better class of citizens, and those who were versed in the laws, were indignant at this and made complaints both to Agrippa and to Albinus. . . . Agrippa in consequence removed him from the high-priesthood."[2]

Even at a time when murder was rife, and violence was becoming a thing of every-day occurrence, the execution of James was viewed with horror and indignation as a notable crime. Josephus is

[1] *Sic* J. B. Mayor; Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 542. According to Hegesippus, however, the murder took place *immediately* before the siege of Jerusalem (Euseb. *H.E.* ii. 23).

[2] *Ant.* xx. 9. 1.

reported to have said that subsequent troubles in connection with the siege of Jerusalem happened to the Jews to avenge James.[1] However that may be, certain it is that after his murder things went from bad to worse in Jerusalem. Outrage succeeded outrage, and tumult succeeded tumult until the city finally met her doom at the hands of the Romans, and, after one of the most terrible sieges in history, was destroyed, Temple and all, in A.D. 70. Shortly before the siege of Jerusalem the Christians there removed in a body to a town beyond Jordan called Pella (A.D. *c.* 66).[2] They are said to have taken this course because of an apocalypse. This apocalypse is in all probability incorporated in Mark xiii. and parallel passages: "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains."

The little community remained quietly secluded in Pella for the space of about sixty years, to a great extent out of touch with the larger Christian world, but still clinging, so far as they could, to their Judaism, and still retaining the title of the Church of Jerusalem.

Shortly before the end of this time of exile the Palestine Church passed through a period of severe trial. The Jews, led by Rabbi Akiba and

[1] Euseb. *H.E.* ii. 23.
[2] *Ibid.* iii. 5.

by Bar-cochba,[1] the last and the greatest of the pretenders to Messiahship, rose against Hadrian, the then Emperor of Rome, and made a desperate attempt to regain their independence as a nation (A.D. *c.* 131). Most of Palestine was soon in the hands of the insurgents. The Christians refused to join them, and were in consequence subjected to most bitter persecution on the part of their fellow Jews, being singled out for spoliation, torture, and death.

The revolt was with much difficulty put down and was ruthlessly stamped out. Jerusalem, which for a brief period had been in the hands of the rebels, and about which were centred their hopes, was turned into a Roman colony. On the site of the old city Hadrian founded a new one, to which he gave the name Ælia Capitolina.[2] The foundations of the Temple are said to have been ploughed up. In their place Hadrian set up a new shrine dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus. Where the Holy of Holies had once stood were erected an image of Jupiter and an equestrian statue of Hadrian himself. Worst of all, approach to the city was forbidden to all persons of the Jewish religion under pain of death. The decree enforcing this was still in vogue as late as A.D. 312.

The Nazarene Church in exile at Pella, if it wished

[1] Bar-cochba means "son of a star." It was a Messianic title derived from Balaam's prophecy (Num. xxiv. 17).

[2] Rebuilt A.D. 136.

to continue as the Jerusalem Church, had only one way left whereby it might escape the common proscription—the renunciation of the practice of the Mosaic ordinances.[1] This course was taken by many of its members, and these returned to the new Jerusalem, under the presidency of a Gentile Bishop.[2] So there was again a Christian Church in Jerusalem. But it was now only an insignificant provincial body, of little importance and influence. From this time forward the Jerusalem Church had nothing distinctive about it, and no special contribution for the Church at large.

There are three important documents connected with the Jerusalem-Pella Church, or, at any rate, with the Christian community of Palestine, of which it was the centre and representative. These are :

(1) The Epistle of James, a book which is most characteristic of the best features of this Church. We find in it the strong Jewish note, and yet undoubted signs of the true Christian spirit. Its doctrine is primitive, undeveloped, cautious, and conservative, while its tone is thoroughly practical, great stress being laid upon the relief of poverty and care for widows and orphans. The Epistle is traditionally ascribed to James, the brother of our Lord. In spite of recent attacks upon this tradition, it may be said that no convincing evidence

[1] *Cf.* Gibbon (*Rom. Empire*, ch. xv.), who has been here followed.

[2] Marcus.

has yet been adduced to show that this James could not have been the writer. At most, all that has been proved is that Christianity, similar to that represented in the Epistle, was to be found surviving as late as the middle of the second century in backward and out-of-the-way regions. There is nothing which does not fit the time, circumstances, and character of the first President of the Jerusalem Church, and it is just such a letter as one might have expected to have been written by him.

(2) The Epistle to the Hebrews. This document does not emanate from the Jerusalem Church, but it closely concerns the great spiritual and historical crisis which befel it in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, when it seemed to be losing all things. To quote Professor Gwatkin : " On the edge of the storm which was visibly gathering over the nation, a nameless Christian teacher writes to a nameless Church of Hebrew Christians (in all probability that of Jerusalem-Pella) that the stately ceremonial of the Temple was merely a type of something better, and the law itself no more than a shadow of the good things which had come to pass. It is the Jews, he wrote, who have the shadow, the Christians the reality. The Jews have the perishing Temple, the Christians the everlasting Priest. So far from Israel's rejection of Christ's followers being strange, it is the very sign of victory. As the Jews cast out Christ to suffer outside the

city, so must the Christians go out to Him and renounce the law at their Master's bidding (Heb. xiii. 11–14)."[1]

(3) The so-called *Odes of Solomon*. This recently found document is, in all probability, the earliest Christian hymn-book. It is not later than the second century, and possibly belongs to the close of the first century. It is distinctly of the early Jewish type of Christianity, and it was suggested by its discoverer, Dr. Rendel Harris, that it might have been connected with the community at Pella. Very beautiful and highly spiritual are many of these hymns. Although they are for the most part strongly Jewish, both in language and conception, the spirit of them rises above the limitations of Judaism, so that, even when they are not distinctly Christian, they express those spiritual experiences and aspirations which belong to all time, and which are gathered up in Christianity. If these hymns belong to Pella they show clearly that live religion was by no means wanting there.

As regards the subsequent history of Jerusalem, it may be noted that in A.D. 327 it was restored to its position as a Holy City by Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor, or rather, by his pious mother, Helena. Helena made a pilgrimage to Palestine, and in particular to Jerusalem and its environments, and founded various Churches

[1] *Early Church Hist.* vol. i. p. 87.

there, one at the Mount of Ascension, another at Bethlehem. The original Church of the Holy Sepulchre was founded a little later, in A.D. 333. Helena is said to have devoted much of her time and energy to relic-hunting. There is a well-known tradition that she discovered the wood of the cross on which our Lord suffered, and the nails with which He was pierced.

The only member of the later Jerusalem Church of much note was Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (*fl.* A.D. 350), some of whose writings have come down to us, *e.g.* his Lectures to Catechumens, which throw considerable light on the church doctrines and practices of his time. Cyril was one of the pillars of orthodoxy in the Arian controversy, but his greatest claim to our interest lies in the fact that almost without doubt it is the creed modified and brought up to date by him for the use of the Jerusalem Church [1] which is now incorporated in the Communion Service of the Church of England, and is commonly though incorrectly called the Nicene Creed.

[1] *Cf.* Hort's *Two Dissertions*, pp. 76 *seq.*

CHAPTER II

EPHESUS

The city of Ephesus shares with Antioch and Jerusalem the honour of being one of the three most influential and considerable centres of apostolic Christianity. Even the Church at Rome was of less importance in the early days.

Ephesus was the metropolis of the Roman province of Asia. It was at the sea end of the great trade-route from Europe into the East which passed through Asia Minor, which fact made it take rank with the two greatest commercial cities of the Eastern Mediterranean—Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt. Its rank as a Church among the many flourishing Churches of the province of Asia was the same as its rank as a city. So it may well stand as representative of that important section of early Christendom.[1]

The city was one of great antiquity. In the far-back ages the valley in which it was situated had been inhabited by Anatolians. About 1100 B.C. the natives were partly displaced by Ionian colo-

[1] To the early Christians Ephesus and Asia were almost convertible terms.

nists, who combined with the remnants of the aboriginal population to build a city constituted on the Greek plan.

The Greek colonists brought with them their own patron deity, Athene. But in time they left off her cult to join the worship of the goddess of their adopted country. They gave her the name of the Greek goddess Artemis,[1] as there were certain superficial points of resemblance between the two.

But, though they changed the name of their new deity, they could not change her nature. The Artemis of the Ephesians, unlike the chaste huntress of Greek mythology, was really a goddess personifying the source of life and fertility, and was somewhat akin to Astarte of the Phœnicians. She was looked upon as the mother of her people and of all living. In the ceremonial connected with her worship she was typified as a " queen bee," her priestesses being called " working bees," and a body of priests attached to her temple being called " drones."

Ephesus owed its pre-eminence in Asia in no small degree to the worship of Artemis, for it was the most important cult in all the province. While other worships gradually fell into decay and obscurity before the levelling influence of Roman policy, the cult of Artemis at Ephesus not only held its ground, but spread over the province, and, from being a wholly local worship, became recog-

[1] A.V. Diana.

nised as pre-eminent in a great part of Asia Minor and elsewhere. "Artemis, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth" (Acts xix. 27), was by no means an altogether idle boast.

We find, then, that at Ephesus, as perhaps nowhere else, it was a heathen cult that was still passionately alive with which Christianity came into contact. Elsewhere heathen worship as such was perfunctory and moribund.

The proudest boast of the Ephesian citizens was that the city was Temple-warden (lit. Temple-sweeper) of Artemis. The temple building itself was one of the most famous architectural works known to the ancient world. The worship in connection with it brought no little wealth and trade into the city. This, of course, partly explains why it was so popular.

As we learn from Acts xix., it was the fact that Christianity had begun to affect the trade dependent on the temple-worship which was the means of bringing about a fierce outbreak on the part of the mob against the Christian teachers. But before that occurred it is evident that Paul at least had met with serious difficulties and some persecution in connection with his work in the city. In writing to the Corinthians, for instance, he tells how he had fought with wild beasts at Ephesus (1 Cor. xv. 32).

Paul at Ephesus.—After a short visit to Ephesus at the close of his second missionary journey, Paul

returned there and made the city his headquarters for the long space of two years and three months, and from there he evangelised the surrounding districts. At first there seems to have been no opposition, but gradually the good-will of the Jews, to whom Paul as usual first turned his attention, cooled. Paul had to take his teaching from the Synagogue to the School of Tyrannus, where he lectured [1] after the usual school hours to a wider audience. These public lectures he supplemented by house-to-house teaching.

Later he came into contact, and probably collision, with the practitioners and votaries of magic. Ephesus was one of the great centres of the practice of magic arts. The earliest Ephesian documents extant (sixth century) deal with the rules of augury.[2] Luke reports that not a few of those who dealt with magical arts were influenced by Paul to such an extent that they renounced their practices and burned their books, some of which were accounted of great value (Acts xix. 19).

Lastly, apparently, came the attack from the Artemis worshippers, led by the silversmiths, which culminated in the great scene in the market-place, so vividly described by Luke.

This marked the close of Paul's stay in the city. Whether he ever stayed there afterwards for any

[1] From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., according to a very early Christian tradition, which may go back to St. Luke himself.

[2] The so-called "Ephesian Letters" were magic formulæ which were engraved and used as amulets all over the world.

considerable length of time we do not know. The First Epistle to Timothy certainly implies that he at least visited Ephesus once or twice after his first imprisonment at Rome, and that he associated himself somewhat closely with the church life there. Luke, however, only records the flying visit paid by Paul on his way to Jerusalem at the close of the third missionary journey. Of Paul's doings after the first imprisonment he tells us nothing.

Ephesus after "Acts."—After the fall of Jerusalem, when the Church there had ceased to be an effective force, the centre of gravity shifted to Ephesus, which for a time became the most important place in the Christian world. Apparently also some of the most important members of the Jerusalem Church gravitated there or to somewhere in the district. Among these, according to tradition, were John the Apostle, and Philip the Apostle, or Philip the Evangelist, perhaps both.

Why the mantle of Jerusalem did not rather fall on Antioch we cannot tell. Perhaps the relations between the two Churches were too strained, or more likely—as Paul seems to have foreseen—Ephesus had proved a much better centre for the propagation of the gospel than Antioch, and was already a kind of Mother-church surrounded by numerous offspring in the shape of vigorous young Christian communities all about her.

In Asia, so to speak, all roads led to Ephesus,

and it was within easy reach of the many prosperous and populous cities of that province. When Paul settled down there for his strenuous two years' teaching and preaching, he knew that his work was not for Ephesus alone, but for the whole of that most important section of the Roman Empire. There was hardly any place from which so much could be accomplished in a short time. He who commanded the ear of Ephesus commanded also the ear of Asia.

Rome was to come later as the natural centre for the Christian Church, but it was too big and too unwieldy for Christianity to make much impression on it in a short space of time. The lesser metropolis played its part first.

We know that the Church of Lesser Asia, of which Ephesus was the head, was of first rank and importance in the first century, and we know too that the individual communities there were many and flourishing; but we have singularly few details on which we can depend. Most of our information about the history of the Church there is taken from Acts, or based upon what can be extracted from New Testament books written after the narrative in Acts closes.

On leaving Acts, the history of the Christian Church as a whole suddenly passes, as it were, from the bright clear light of day into mist and darkness which lasts till we are well into the first quarter of the second century. Here and there we have a

glimpse into the life and movement of the Church. It is there, and it is working ; there is an occasional voice from out the gloom, but we cannot always be sure of the faces of those who speak, even when their words ring true. From time to time we dimly discern figures moving, we catch the lurid glare of Nero's martyr torches, and later become aware that some of the "not many noble, not many mighty," found among the humble ranks of the Christians are falling victims to the spies and informers of Domitian.

But for the most part we can see little and hear little of what is going on during this most crucial time of the Church's development in the generation after Christ.

When the Church reappears she is no longer an insignificant sect, but a community with branches all over the Mediterranean world, something to be reckoned with, something that cannot be overlooked. It is just during this dimly lighted time that Ephesus and the Church of Asia is most to the fore. When daylight comes again her importance is waning, and she is beginning to be eclipsed by Rome.

We have three groups of letters, two of them written during this period, which are connected with the Church in Ephesus and Asia. From these can be gathered some idea of its characteristics and of its importance.

1. The letters of St. Paul—
   (*a*) To Ephesus and Colosse.
   (*b*) To Timothy.
2. The letters to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse.
3. The letters of the martyr-Bishop Ignatius of Antioch.

I. Paul's letters to the Ephesians, and Colossians and Philemon) must have been written from Rome just about the time when the narrative in Acts ceases. 1 Timothy belongs to a later period. In connection with these three points in particular may be noticed:

(*a*) In the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was probably originally intended for the group of Asiatic Churches of which Ephesus was the head, Paul reaches the highest point in his theology. To no other Church does he give such advanced teaching. Others might not be fit for more than the "milk of the word," but to this Church he gives "strong meat." Ephesus must have responded readily to his teaching, and its Christianity must have far passed the rudimentary stages that Paul should thus give it of his best.

(*b*) In the Epistle to the Colossians in particular, and in that to the Ephesians in general, we get a hint of a distinctive tendency of the Church of Asia. We find there indications of that touch of Asiatic mysticism, and of that lively sense of the spiritual and spiritualistic which is

wanting in the pure Greek or Hebrew. This easily, as can be seen from Colossians, led to speculative heresies; but, on the other hand, it made the inner side of the Christian mysteries easier to be understood.

(*c*) In 1 Timothy, which is directed to Ephesus, where Timothy had been left in charge of the Church, we notice that the organisation of the Church indicated there approaches nearer to that which became permanent in later times than anything else to be found in the New Testament.

Altogether the impression derived from this letter is that it is not a mission-station which is there being dealt with, but a settled and carefully organised Church, that has been in existence for some considerable time, that has passed the difficulties and dangers of youth, and is more subject to the temptations of respectable middle age.[1]

II. The second group of letters is in the Apocalypse, and is addressed to the "Seven Churches which are in Asia" (Rev. ii. and iii). The list begins with Ephesus as the chief city, and comprises Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. "These seven Churches," as Ramsay says, "make up the complete Church of the province Asia, because each of them stands in place of a group of Churches. The Church of

[1] These observations hold good though the Pauline authorship of the Epistle be called in question, as it is in many quarters.

the province Asia in its turn stands in place of the universal Church of Christ."

The letters are not arbitrarily arranged, but are in order of a kind of circular route which begins at Ephesus, goes northward to Smyrna and Pergamum, then east and south to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and back west to Ephesus. It has been suggested that the seven stars which represent these seven cities in the visions appeared as a chain of jewels in the hand of the Son of Man.

Recent research has shown that the writer of these letters must have been intimately acquainted with the history and characteristics of each of the cities and Churches addressed. It should be noticed that he appears to identify city and Church in each case, which may suggest that the Churches were by this time so large as to be co-extensive with the cities.

The writer was a Palestinian Jew,[1] but now that Jerusalem had fallen he naturally turned to Ephesus and the Church of Asia with his divine message. The Asiatic Church was natural heir to that of Jerusalem.

Each of the letters in the group helps to throw light on the character of the Asiatic Church. These are dealt with in masterly fashion by Sir W. Ramsay[2] in his *Letters to the Seven Churches*. The letter to

[1] Whether he was John the apostle or not.

[2] To whom I am frequently indebted in this chapter.

the central Church of Ephesus (ii. 1–7) is typical. It is evident from it that when the letter was written Ephesus already had behind it a fine record of service for the Master's sake,[1] and could hardly do better than keep up to its ancient standards. "I know thy works and thy toil and thy patience" (ver. 2). "Thou didst bear for My name's sake and hast not grown weary" (ver. 3). "Do the first works" (ver. 5).

"Thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves apostles" (ver. 2) is a further testimony of the writer of the Letters to the services rendered by the Church in safeguarding the Christian tradition, and strenuously combating error.

Ephesus was situated on one of the world's great trade-routes. Through it passed a constant stream of travellers and visitors of every description, among whom were not a few who claimed to be Christian teachers. The well-instructed Church there tested all such, and unhesitatingly rejected any false doctrine that it detected. It was evidently sternly orthodox, and strictly guarded the faith committed to it.

Although the theology of Ephesus was irreproachable, and its past history of the best, there had come to be something lacking. As the writer says, "Thou didst leave thy first love" (ver. 4). Its danger and its fault was that of the "unco'

[1] "For My name's sake" (Rev. ii. 3).

guid and much respeckit." Its heart was not so warm as it had been. "The intense fervour of the Church had grown cooler with advancing age. It possessed every great quality except a loving enthusiasm."

Ramsay sums up the letter thus: "It shows admiration and full appreciation of a great career and a whole history. Yet it does not leave a pleasant impression of the Ephesian Church. . . . The writer seems not to have loved the Ephesians as he did the Smyrnæans and Philadelphians. He respected and esteemed them. . . . In order to finish with a word of praise, he seeks for some laudable fact in the present moment, and the one thing he finds to say is that they hated those he hated—the Nicolaitans. Their disapproval was correctly apportioned; in sympathy and love they were deficient. . . .

"The Ephesians stand before us as a dignified people, worthy of their great position, who had lived through a noble history in the past, and were on the whole not unworthy of it in the present (lacking only the power of loving and of making themselves loved)."

III. The third group of letters connected with Ephesus and the Church of Asia were written by Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch in Syria, *en route* for martyrdom at Rome (A.D. *c.* 111). He halted at Smyrna, and there wrote letters to the Churches of Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus, which had sent

representatives to see him, and later, when halting at Troas, he wrote to Smyrna (and to its Bishop Polycarp) and to Philadelphia. All these letters we now have. From them we can see how important and influential the Church of Asia had grown; and also, by comparing them with the literature of other Churches of the period, we can see how rapidly Episcopacy had developed in this quarter of Christendom. Indeed, it was in Ephesus and district that Episcopacy was first definitely established as an indispensable element in the government of the Church.

From the tone of the letter to Ephesus, we can gather what a high position that Church held at the beginning of the second century, and Ignatius's testimony shows clearly that the reputation of Ephesus in the Christian world had not grown weaker or less brilliant in the short time since "John" wrote. He refers to Ephesus as "the passage way of those who are slain unto God"—(the highway of the martyrs). He also speaks of "some who have passed by the Ephesians, having perverse doctrine which they did not suffer to spread among them, but stopped their ears, etc.," which reminds one strangely of the letter in the Apocalypse (ii. 2). Later on he says, "the Christians of Ephesus, who have always agreed with the Apostles through the power of Jesus Christ." The agreement of the Ephesian Church and its intimate connection with apostolic

teaching and tradition, was evidently then, as in after-times, well known. From the whole tone of the letter also it is clear that the Bishop even of Antioch looked up to the Church of Ephesus as a spiritual example and guide. He speaks of it as "so famous throughout all the world." He wishes to be "found in the lot of the Christians of Ephesus." He feels that he ought to be trained by them in faith and patience.[1]

Ephesus and the New Testament.—No other Church is so closely connected with the making of the New Testament as is Ephesus and its neighbourhood. Indeed, it is far from unlikely that the collection of documents, which go to form our New Testament, was initiated there.

The following are the books of the New Testament which were written either to or from Ephesus, or were closely associated with it.

The Apocalypse, as we have seen, was intimately connected with the Church there.

So also Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, and that to Philemon.

1 Timothy, too, has already been discussed. To it must probably be added 2 Timothy also.

1 Corinthians, and most probably 2 Cor. x.–xiii., were written by Paul when at Ephesus. Some scholars further hold that Galatians likewise was written from there.

Last, but not least, the Johannine writings,

[1] *Cf.* Rev. ii. 3.

viz. the Gospel and the three Epistles of John, emanate from there, and are perhaps more characteristic of the best side of Ephesian Christianity than any other of the literature connected with the place.

In short, Christendom owes to Ephesus directly and indirectly about half the New Testament.

John at Ephesus.—One of the most constant traditions of the Church, from Irenæus (Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 177) onwards, is that after Paul's departure from Asia Minor, John the Apostle took up his abode in Ephesus, where he held a leading position throughout the whole Church of Asia Minor.

Irenæus relates how, in his youth, he had heard his teacher Polycarp of Smyrna tell about "his intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord."

Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, when writing to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in A.D. 196, about the Asiatic time of keeping Easter, which differed from that of the Western Churches, relates of John, whom he describes as having "lain on the bosom of the Lord," that he was buried at Ephesus.

Some scholars are strongly of the opinion that this John was not the Apostle, but a distinguished "disciple of the Lord" (whether a contemporary of Jesus or a second-generation disciple is disputed) called John the Elder, who towards the

end of the second century was confused with the Apostle.[1]

It is possible that both John the Apostle and John the Elder were prominent men in the Ephesian Church. It is also possible, though not probable, that they were one and the same person.[2]

There are some interesting stories connected with John the Apostle at Ephesus. Irenæus relates that when John was one day in the baths at Ephesus, he learnt that Cerinthus, the Docetic heretic, had come in. John therefore exclaimed, "Let us flee, lest the room fall in, for Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is with us."

This story well illustrates the characteristic orthodox temper of the Ephesian Church. It also fits in with 1 and 2 John, which are apparently directed against the Docetic heresy.

[1] It is a curious fact that earlier writers than Irenæus who are connected with Ephesus, or thereabouts, do not mention the ministry of John the Apostle at Ephesus. Ignatius, writing A.D. c. 111, never refers to it; neither does Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (near Ephesus), in the first half of the second century; nor does Polycarp himself. But with regard to Papias and Polycarp it is only fair to say that hardly any of their writings have come down to us. So little, indeed, that the argument from silence is somewhat precarious. It is, perhaps, further significant that even Irenæus regularly calls John "the disciple of the Lord," not "the Apostle," the former being also the way in which John the Elder is referred to by Papias.

These facts are certainly weighty, but they cannot be taken as decisive, and they certainly do not outweigh the testimony of Irenæus and Polycrates, not to speak of other evidence from about the same date.

[2] Papias, however, distinctly speaks of John the Elder as distinct from John the Apostle.

Another, and rather more pleasing, story is told by Jerome, who relates how John, in extreme old age, used to be carried to the various meetings of the Christians, and how all he would say was "Little children, love one another."

John of Ephesus, whether the Apostle or not, was in his time perhaps the most prominent and influential person in the Christian Church, and was an important witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Even if it cannot be proved that it was John who wrote the fourth Gospel, it is generally agreed that its birthplace was Ephesus, and that it is representative of the type of theology that flourished there. So also the Epistles which are from the same school, and almost certainly from the same hand.

Whatever view one finally adopts as to the question of authorship, or even the literal historicity of the fourth Gospel, it must be admitted that it stands supreme as the most spiritual, satisfying, and universal interpretation of the historic facts of Christianity and Christ.

Humanly speaking, it is to Ephesus that we owe this peculiar outlook and temper of the Johannine writings which helps to make them so valuable.

It is difficult indeed to estimate the debt of Christendom to Ephesus and its theological outlook.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of what one might call Ephesian theology is its spirituality. It translates, so to speak, the facts and practices of Christianity into the language of the spiritual spheres. It gets to the back of things—to the very heart and soul of the Christian religion.

Ephesus in later times.—Ephesus long continued to hold a fairly important place in the Christianity of the East. The Bishop of Ephesus was metropolitan of Asia. But even in the East it soon came to be of less account than Alexandria and Antioch, and later was quite overwhelmed by Constantinople. In the Church at large, it soon fell to second-rate importance, even though it owed somewhat to its claim to represent primitive apostolic traditions.

It ever tended to live on its past. Not many great names are connected with it. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, the Grand Old Man of the second century, is, perhaps, the best known after John. His fame rests for the most part on the brave words he spoke at the trial before his martyrdom. "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King that has saved me?" He is also interesting as an historical link with John.

Twice in the fifth century Ephesus came into prominence through two most important councils which were held there. These were: 1. The Third General Council (A.D. 431) when Nestorianism was

condemned (*vide* "Constantinople"). 2. The notorious "Robber" Synod (A.D. 449).

Ephesus of to-day.—The modern name of Ephesus is Ayassoluk. The name is derived from that of a church near by built by Justinian about A.D. 530, which was dedicated to John the Holy Theologian (Hagios Theologos). This church became the centre of a town, Ephesus itself being gradually abandoned. It is now a mere village.

CHAPTER III

ALEXANDRIA

SOMEWHERE in the first half of the second century Alexandria gradually came to be the successor of Ephesus as the leading Christian city in the Eastern Mediterranean world, though it was Rome which about this time became the chief Christian centre of all. This position Alexandria kept until it was ousted by the pretensions of the Imperial and Christian city of Constantinople, which claimed to be supreme politically and religiously, not only in the East, but in the whole of the Roman Empire. It may well stand as the most representative type of what may be called Hellenistic Christianity—that is, the Christianity of the Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking members of the Church universal. As we shall see, this type of Christianity was markedly different from that which obtained in the West among Latin-speaking peoples.

Further, although it belonged mainly to the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, Greek Christianity was distinct from the Oriental type which sprang up farther east, which we shall have to discuss in dealing with Edessa.

Alexandria was from its foundation a Greek city. It was founded [1] and, in part at least, planned by Alexander the Great in accordance with his masterly policy of colonisation by which he endeavoured to consolidate the Empire which he built up so rapidly. Alexandria was indeed the most lasting monument to his name and fame.[2]

From his time until it became part of the Roman Empire [3] it was the capital of the Greek kingdom of Egypt and the place of residence of its monarchs, the Ptolemies.

Although capital of Egypt, it was never an Egyptian city, but always Greek, and was after Athens the most considerable centre of Greek learning and culture in the world. This was mainly due to its rulers, the Ptolemies, several of whom were eager and generous patrons of learning and scholarship. Famous men of letters flocked there,[4] magnificent lecture-halls were built, while almost the most treasured possession of the city was its vast collection of books. Nowhere was learning more honoured and scholarship ranked so high. The head of the Museum, which corresponded to a modern university, was *ex-officio* one of the four chief magistrates of the city.

[1] About 331 B.C.

[2] Alexander was buried there 322 B.C.

[3] Alexandria was taken by Julius Cæsar 48 B.C. Egypt as a whole became a Roman province in 30 B.C.

[4] Amongst the Alexandrian scholars were such men as Euclid, Archimedes, Aratus, and Callimachus.

Besides being a great university town, Alexandria was perhaps the greatest port on the Mediterranean, and in commercial importance stood second only to Rome. The famous trading city of Tyre was destroyed by Alexander about the same time as Alexandria was founded, and soon Alexandria took its place in the commerce of the world. It was the port for all the fertile land of Egypt, besides being a convenient centre for trade with the Semitic world, and with the Farther East. Rome was largely dependent on Egypt for its corn supply, and, as Alexandria commanded that, the possession of the city was of immense importance in the Empire. He who held Alexandria could practically dictate to Rome. Consequently Augustus placed it directly under the power of the Emperor, prohibiting it to the Senate.

The city was ideally situated for a port. It was built on the East of the Nile Delta along six miles of the long, narrow strip of land lying between Lake Mareotis and the Mediterranean. About a mile from the land stretched the island of Pharos, which was joined to the city by a mole, on each side of which, as well as elsewhere, were commodious quays and docks suitable for the great fleets of merchant vessels and especially corn-ships which sailed from there. On the eastern point of the island stood the great white marble lighthouse of Pharos, rising into the sky some 400 feet,

which had been built by Ptolemy Philadelphus [1] (*c.* 280 B.C.).

Amongst the most interesting buildings of Alexandria were the Serapeum, the Cæsareum, and the Museum.

The Serapeum was the most famous of all the Alexandrian temples, and was a monument to the degrading heathen superstition which boldly held its place alongside of the most refined forms of the philosophy and religion of the Greeks. Serapis was a god whose cult was imported into Egypt about the time of the early Ptolemies. The headquarters of his worship was at Alexandria. Serapis was associated with the native Egyptian gods, Isis and Osiris,[2] being partly identified with Osiris and as such considered as the husband of Isis. The worship of Serapis was connected with many degrading superstitions and debasing practices. When Paganism began to give way before Christianity this temple of Serapis, and especially a gigantic image of the god which stood within it, came to stand as the chief symbol of the old order of things, and so long as the image stood it was felt that

[1] The story is told that the architect, Sostratus, had the inscription telling that the lighthouse had been erected by Ptolemy engraved in mortar. When the mortar, in course of time, wore away and with it Ptolemy's inscription, the following words engraved in stone became visible: "Sostratus . . . to the Saviour-gods [*i.e.*, according to Dr. Rendel Harris, the Dioscuri] for the benefit of sailors."

[2] Clement of Alexandria conjectures that the name Serapis is actually derived from Osiris and Apis, the sacred bull in which the spirit of Osiris was supposed to dwell.

Christianity had not yet proved itself conqueror. The temple was destroyed in A.D. 389 by Theophilus the Archbishop of Alexandria, a man who was better fitted for breaking down the outward forms of heathenism than for building up the essential matters of Christianity. The destruction of the temple buildings brought to light many of the frauds and vices connected with the place, and served as an exposure of the impostures, and worse, attached to heathen worship generally. The image of Serapis was destroyed at the same time as the temple in a scene of intense emotion.[1]

The Cæsareum, another vast building, or rather pile of buildings, one of the greatest landmarks of

[1] Gibbon describes the image and its fall thus: "The colossal statue of Serapis was involved in the ruin of his temple and religion. . . . The aspect of Serapis . . . was extremely similar to the ordinary representation of Jupiter. He was distinguished from Jupiter by the basket or bushel which was placed on his head, and by the emblematic monster which he held in his right hand: the head and body of a serpent branching into three tails which were again terminated by the triple heads of a dog, a lion, and a wolf. It was confidently affirmed that, if any impious hand should dare to violate the majesty of the god, the heavens and the earth would instantly return to their original chaos. An intrepid soldier, animated by zeal, and armed with a mighty battle-axe, ascended the ladder, and even the Christian multitude expected with some anxiety the event of the combat. He aimed a vigorous stroke against the cheek of Serapis; the cheek fell to the ground; the thunder was still silent, and both the heavens and the earth continued their accustomed order and tranquillity. The victorious soldier repeated his blows; the huge idol was overthrown and broken in pieces; and the limbs of Serapis were ignominiously dragged through the streets of Alexandria. . . . Many persons attributed their conversion to this discovery of the impotence of their tutelar deity" (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xxvii.).

Alexandria, was at first a temple also, but under Athanasius,[1] at the suggestion of the Emperor Constantius, it was altered to a Christian church,[2] by far the largest and most important in the city. It was specially used as the Patriarchal Church, and was to all intents and purposes the Cathedral. The Cæsareum, less than a century later, was the scene of the horrid murder of Hypatia, the famous Neo-Platonist woman philosopher, an event which has left an ineradicable blot on the Christian history of Alexandria.

But the Museum was in many ways perhaps the greatest glory of Alexandria, and that for which it stood has left a lasting impress on Christian thought, and the forms at least of Christian belief. It was the intellectual centre of the city, and to some extent of the Greek world. Here thinkers and scholars from all parts of the civilised world congregated, here oriental ideas mingled with Greek speculations, here the works of the sages of all nations were conned and studied, here Judaism, and later Christianity, learned to don the philosopher's robe. The magnificent group of buildings[3] of which it consisted included noble colonnades of costly marble, lecture-theatres and lofty hall, and above all the libraries, containing

[1] *Vide* p. 74.

[2] Consecrated *c.* 355. The Serapeum also was partly rebuilt as a Christian church.

[3] The Museum was founded and endowed by Ptolemy Soter, the first of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

the finest collection of books the world had ever seen.[1]

Several of the Ptolemies had been great bibliophiles and had spared neither pains nor money in ransacking the world for books, endeavouring to obtain manuscripts of all existing written books, and, where possible, of the earliest known copies.[2] Part of the library was destroyed by fire when Julius Cæsar took the city (48 B.C.), but Marcus Antonius shortly afterwards (36 B.C.) transferred to the Museum the Pergamum Library, which was said to consist of 200,000 volumes. Some centuries later the library was again partially destroyed by Theophilus, the iconoclastic Christian Bishop (A.D. *c.* 390), who in so doing went directly, as will be seen, in the face of the best traditions of the Alexandrian Church. It was finally and wholly destroyed when the city was taken by the Moslems under Amri, the general of the Caliph Omar (A.D. *c.* 640). The story goes that the manuscripts were used as fuel for the furnaces of the public baths of the city, and that they lasted a full six months. To Omar is attributed the saying that "if these books contained the same doctrine as the Koran, they could be of no use since the Koran

[1] Part of the books were housed in the Serapeum.

[2] Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.), for instance, bought up Aristotle's library. He is also said to have caused the Jewish Law to be translated into Greek so that his library might have a copy. His successor, Ptolemy Euergetes, ordered all travellers who came to Alexandria to present to the library copies of any books they possessed.

contained all necessary truths; if they contained anything contrary to that book, they ought to be destroyed."[1]

Like most ports, Alexandria was cosmopolitan in its inhabitants. Natives of every clime jostled one another on its streets and quays; but the bulk of the people were Egyptians, Jews, and Greeks.

The Egyptians, degenerate descendants of a great people, were of least account and supplied the least desirable element. They kept many of the worst features of their old religious beliefs and practices, notably various kinds of animal worship. Most of what was nobler and more elevating in the ancient Egyptian religion seems to have passed away with the glories of the race. Much of the Egyptian worship and religious mythology received a Greek dress; but, on the other hand, the Egyptians infected the Greeks, and later the Romans, with not a few of their most degrading religious practices and superstitions. Later still, as many of them became Christianised, they seem to have imported into the Church not a little savagery and fanaticism which had beforetime been conspicuous by its absence. It was the Egyptian element in Alexandrian mobs, whether Pagan or Christian, which always made them so dangerous.

[1] Some authorities attribute a very similar remark to Theophilus. It is possible that neither of them said anything of the kind. But, in any case, the library is no more, and the world is the poorer thanks to both of them.

The Jews, on the other hand, supplied a steadying element in the city, and stood on the whole for law and order. Disliked as they usually were, they were everywhere recognised as valuable citizens. Some two-fifths of the population were of Jewish descent and faith. They lived in the north-east of the city in a quarter of their own, and were allowed special privileges, among them that of living in accordance with their own particular laws and under the rule of one of their own people, who bore the title of Alabarch.

It was by the Jews of Alexandria that the Old Testament was translated into Greek. Though it may be true that the beginning of the translation was made at the instance of Ptolemy Philadelphus and not on the initiative of the Jews themselves, it met a felt need, for, with the exception of the scholars among them, they had ceased to understand Hebrew or Aramaic, and were as Greek-speaking as the rest of their fellow-citizens. Once the Law had been translated it was not long before the rest of the Old Testament was turned into Greek. It was this Alexandrian Greek Old Testament, rather than the Hebrew, which the early Church took over from the Jews, and which was moreover the one chiefly used by the writers of the New Testament.

Not only did the Alexandrian Jews have the Old Testament translated, but they added to it, or, to put it more fairly, the last stage in the growth

of the Old Testament took place mainly at Alexandria. The Scriptures which emanated from there were not, it is true, officially recognised by the Palestinian Jews, but some of them are not the less valuable on that account. The additional books of the Alexandrian Jewish Bible [1] were what we now know as the Old Testament Apocrypha. The one which shows most clearly the marks of its connection with Alexandrian thought is the Wisdom of Solomon, and is in itself evidence that inspiration and revelation was not entirely confined to Palestine or to the Hebrew language.

Although the Jews had their own quarter of the town, their men of letters, at least, came into close contact with the abounding intellectual life of the Greek scholars and philosophers who congregated in the city, and were profoundly influenced thereby. The Jews endeavoured to commend their faith to the Greek world, and indeed did so with some measure of success, so that Alexandria in time became the centre of a great proselytising movement. At the same time they themselves became conversant with the literature of the Greeks and imbued with much of their philosophy, and were altogether broader in their outlook than their Palestinian brethren. "As they were thus brought into more intimate relations, the Jew and Greek learned to appreciate what was best in their respective reli-

[1] With the addition of 2 Esdras.

gions, and the way was prepared for their ultimate fusion in Christianity." [1]

Some of the Jews took high rank among the learned men of the city. Among these was *Aristobulus*, the teacher of Ptolemy Philometer (170–150 B.C.), who among other works wrote an explanation of the Mosaic Laws for the benefit of his royal pupil, in which he endeavoured to harmonise philosophy with the revelation embodied in the Jewish Scriptures.

But most notable of all the Alexandrian Jews was *Philo*, a contemporary of our Lord. An earnest and broad-minded man, at once a Stoic philosopher and a zealous Jew, deeply versed in Hellenistic and Judaic lore, he stands as the prototype of Hellenistic Judaism. As Farrar puts it, "He somehow combined the mystic rationalism which he had learned from Plato with the supernaturalism which he owed to his Jewish training." [2] He so endeavoured to harmonise Platonism and Mosaism, and so systematically read one into the other, that the proverb arose, "Either Plato philonises or Philo platonises." His chief interest for us is his allegoric method of interpreting the Scriptures, and his "Logos Doctrine," in both of which in later times he was closely followed by the Christian scholars of his city.

The Greeks constituted the aristocracy of the

[1] Kent, *History of the Jews*, p. 286.
[2] Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 138.

city, and, as we have said, gave it its distinctive tone. They inhabited the central and most important quarter, where most of the finest buildings were to be found. They had all the love of beauty and the intellectual avidity so characteristic of Greeks everywhere; but to this was added a degree of mental thoroughness and moral earnestness which was not so common.

Among them, stimulated doubtless by the learned men who flocked to the Museum, and helped on by the treasures amassed in its libraries, there grew up a recognised and distinctive literary school of thought which subsequently, about the time of the Christian era, gradually changed its centre of interest from literature to speculative philosophy.

The earlier "Alexandrian School," as it is called, was really a movement towards "continuing and developing the old Hellenic culture." There was little creative genius shown, such as there had been in early Greek literature. For this a substitute was found in learned and minute research, extended and multifarious knowledge.[1]

Immense pains were expended on critical examination of the literature of the past. It was the age of commentaries rather than of original work. These Alexandrians were besides, to all intents and purposes, the fathers of textual criticism, and, in a measure, of "higher" criticism also.

[1] Substantially from *Encyc. Brit.*, "Alexandria."

This eventually prepared the way for a scientific study of the Bible by Christians. The later Alexandrian school took the form of a revival of such of the teaching of the earlier Greek philosophers, and especially of Plato, as had a religious interest. This was partly due to contact with the religion of the Jews, and later of the Christians. The influence of oriental mystic speculations may also be traced in the movement.[1] This philosophical revival is known as Neo-Platonism, and the resultant system has been described as a "synthesis of Platonism, Stoicism, and the later Aristotelianism with a leaven of oriental mysticism."[2]

The Neo-Platonists "devoted themselves to examining the nature of the soul, and taught that its freedom consists in communion with God, to be achieved in a sort of ecstatic trance." Ammonius Saccas was the founder of the school, but the most famous and attractive of its teachers was Plotinus (A.D. 205–270). He is the saint among Greek-speaking philosophers. His teaching, though it had nothing distinctively Christian in it, nevertheless approximated more to Christianity than any other "heathen" doctrine. According to Plotinus, the "absolute, that which is above the senses, is the foundation of the world. It is knowable by intuition, which precedes thought. Intelligence,

[1] Oriental mysticism is held by some to have given the chief impulse.

[2] *Encyc. Brit.*, "Alexandria."

the product and image of the One, penetrates all things, and the soul proceeds from it, the forming thought; the soul again seeks the One, the God, the original cause of the universe." Plotinus taught a kind of doctrine of the Trinity. His God consisted of three "persons" in one—the good, the mind, and the world-soul. Many Christians were influenced by his teaching, especially that relating to the communion of the soul with God. Neo-Platonism reached its high-water mark in Plotinus. Its later exponents used it in direct antagonism to Christianity as a kind of counter-attraction. Porphyry, one of Plotinus's most distinguished pupils, showed himself a deadly enemy of the Christians, though he borrowed much from them. The last of the great Alexandrian Neo-Platonists was the ill-fated Hypatia.

Early History.—The early history of the Christian Church at Alexandria is unknown, though tradition states that Mark the Evangelist was its founder. There is no mention in the New Testament of any Church there. One Alexandrian convert to Christianity is spoken of—Apollos the Jew (Acts xviii. 24), but it was at Ephesus that he was brought to the knowledge of the truth. The gospel, however, made good progress there until, by the middle of the second century at latest, the Christian community of Alexandria had become one of the most influential in the Roman Empire.

In many places no very advanced teaching was necessary for Christian inquirers or converts, but in Alexandria, as among the educated classes of India at the present day, the intellectual and theoretical side of the gospel had to be emphasised. Not a few inquirers were cultivated students and learned men. And, just as in India Christian universities and colleges have arisen to meet the exigencies of the case, so in Alexandria arose a famous Christian lecture-school, whose teachers were able to meet scholars on their own ground and deal with the difficulties or objections of the philosophically minded Alexandrians who were interested in Christianity.

We find, then, that the leading Alexandrian Christians were on the one hand strongly imbued with a sense of the value and beauty of much which the old Greek philosophers had taught, while on the other hand the truth of Christianity had gripped them even more vitally.

A two-fold task, therefore, lay before them :

1. They had to defend and commend the teaching of the Christian Church in such manner that it should appeal to the cultured and philosophic thinkers of the heathen world.

2. They had to bring Greek philosophy into relation with Christianity and justify so doing to the Christian Church.

As Paul had claimed for Christianity the whole heritage of all that was of worth in Judaism, so the

Alexandrians claimed for Christianity all that was of worth in Hellenism. This was perhaps their supreme contribution to Christendom. Virtually they annexed the kingdom of the intellect for the Empire of Christ. They may be said to have stood for the essential unity of all truth, and for the complementary conception that all truth, wherever found, may eventually be traced back to God. As one of the greatest of the Alexandrians said: "Truth is one. . . . The Bacchantes tore asunder the limbs of Pentheus; in like manner have the sects both of barbarian and Hellenic philosophy treated truth, and each vaunts as the whole truth the portion which had fallen to its lot. But all, in my opinion, are illuminated by the dawn of Light. . . . The barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth, not from the mythology of Dionysus, but from the theology of the Everlasting Word." [1] It is true that they did not always understand the implications of this position, and sometimes even went back upon it; it is true that they attempted to prove their position by what are to us somewhat unconvincing methods; it is true that sometimes they proved too much, and at times introduced into Christianity what was really essentially alien to it; yet, when the worst has been said, it must be acknowledged that their instinct was fundamentally right, and that Christianity is infinitely richer and more

[1] Clement, *Strom.* i. 13.

approximate to the "full orb" because of this their contribution to it.

During the second and third centuries Alexandria was the true centre of Christian scholarship.

The first teacher of note in the Christian catechetical school was Pantænus, a converted Stoic, who eventually gave up his position to go as a missionary to India.

The most famous of Pantænus's successors were Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Didymus the Blind.

Clement.—The teaching of Clement may be taken as characteristic of the Alexandrian tendency of which we have been treating. He had been a heathen philosopher, probably an Athenian, and was converted to Christianity at Alexandria, where he settled, becoming the pupil, then perhaps the colleague and later the successor, of Pantænus. Eventually he was driven from Alexandria during a severe persecution which took place during the reign of Septimius Severus. Some of his writings which have come down to us are constructed from the substance of his lectures. They form a connected series made up of three parts:—(1) *Exhortations to the Heathen;* (2) *The Tutor* (*Paidagogos*); and (3) *Miscellanies* (*Stromateis*) or "Gnostic notes according to the true philosophy." In the *Exhortations* Clement tries to show the infinite superiority of Christianity to the religions, and especially the philosophy, of the heathen

world. The underlying thought in both the *Tutor* and the *Miscellanies* is that God has been, and is, *educating* the human race through the "Word." Clement, it should be noticed, does not reach the conception of *evolution* in God's dealings with mankind, but he does suggest that there is *progress*, though the point is not pressed. It is further interesting to note that Clement is instinctively interested in God as a teacher and giver of knowledge. This interest in "knowledge" in Christianity is characteristic of Alexandria also.

This education has been the preparation for the gospel, and is to be seen not only in the Old Testament, but in Greek philosophy.

"Before the coming of the Lord," he says in one place, "philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness; but now it is useful for godliness, being a kind of preliminary training for those who gain faith through demonstration. . . . God is the cause of all good things, but of some primarily, as of the Old Testament and New Testament, and of others by consequence as philosophy. Perchance, too, philosophy was given to the Greeks primarily, till the Lord should call the Greeks. For, as the law was to the Hebrews, this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind to Christ. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ."[1]

[1] *Strom.* i. 5; i. 405; *cf.* also ii. 342, 395, 327

Clement himself makes constant use of Greek philosophy, and of the Greek classical literature in general, in his writings. Indeed, his language, and often his arguments, are far more Platonic and Hellenic than biblical.

He vigorously defends the use of Greek philosophy by Christians. "The multitude," he says, "are frightened at the Hellenic philosophy, as children are at masks, being afraid lest it lead them astray. But if the faith (for I cannot call it knowledge) which they possess be such as to be dissolved by plausible speech let it be by all means dissolved. . . . Truth is immovable." [1]

Elsewhere also he defends the way in which he himself makes use of quotations from Greek writers to confirm his statements by suggesting that "the Gentiles will be most easily brought to embrace the truth if it be presented to them under a form with which they are familiar." [2]

Cultured and refined, with his rare breadth of vision and his big view of Jesus Christ, Clement is typical of Alexandrian Christianity in its best days. F. D. Maurice says of him, and one cannot but endorse the words: "Clement seems to me that one of the old Fathers whom we should all have reverenced most as a teacher and loved best as a friend."

Origen.—Greater even than Clement was his

[1] *Strom.* vi. 10.

[2] *Strom.* v. 4; and *cf.* Kaye, *Writings of Clem. Al.* p. 147.

successor Origen, the most brilliant representative of the Alexandrian school. Origen was indeed the embodiment of all that was finest in Alexandrianism, while at the same time he was not altogether exempt from its weaknesses and shortcomings. No account of Alexandrian Christianity would have any completeness without some sketch of him and his characteristics.

Unlike Clement, he was brought up as a Christian. He became head of the catechetical school at the early age of eighteen, and soon attached to himself crowds of students; at first only from Alexandria itself, but later from many parts of the world. The methods of teaching which he developed exhibit the catholicity and thoroughness of the Alexandrian temper of mind at its best. We have an account of these from one of his most appreciative pupils [1] who studied under him when Origen had emigrated to Cæsarea, which he did toward the end of his life. Origen first of all endeavoured to instil into his pupils the habits of clearness of thinking and accuracy in speaking. As Gregory says, "He prepared for the reception of the words of truth . . . by probing us and questioning us and offering problems for our solution." He then led them on to the study of mathematics and natural philosophy. "Such investigations served to show man in his true relation to the world, and gave him a rational feeling for the vast grandeur

[1] Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea.

of the external order." This was specially typical of the Alexandrian effort to see things as a whole.

Physics led on to a course of moral science, especially Christian ethics, which was in its turn a preparation for the study of the Greek poets and philosophers. Origen encouraged his pupils to seek for light and help everywhere, and to take all of value that the sages of old had to give. He himself, like Clement, set a high value on the knowledge of heathen thought, partly for the truth contained in it, and partly because acquaintance with it helped him to help others. Besides making an extensive study of Greek literature and philosophy, he attended heathen lectures, so as to be the better able to understand their point of view.[1] He was, for example, a pupil for a time of the Neo-Platonist, Ammonius Saccas.[2]

The crown of the course of education (rightly so called in his case), which he gave to his disciples was the study of theology, and especially of the Bible, for he "found in the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Spirit the final and absolute spring of divine truth."[3] From all this it may be seen that, for Origen, "Thou shalt love the Lord

[1] In this endeavour he was extraordinarily successful, not only with heathen inquirers, but with heretical opponents, many of whom, at one time or another in his life, he weaned from their errors by the sheer reasonableness both of his temper and his arguments.

[2] *Vide sup.* p. 44.

[3] Westcott, Murray's *Dict. of Christian Biography.*

thy God with all thy . . . mind," was one of the fundamental principles in the Christian life.

Origen was one of the first great expositors of Scripture. He wrote commentaries on most of the books of the Bible; although he unfortunately adopted a pernicious system of biblical interpretation [1] which greatly detracted from the permanent value of his work in this direction, yet, in spite of this, his commentaries abound in illuminating and suggestive thought, and are remarkable for their freshness and originality, and especially for the spiritual insight displayed in them.

One of his greatest services to biblical scholarship was his *Hexapla*, a monumental piece of work in which he compared the whole text of the Septuagint with the Hebrew and with the other Greek versions which had been made.[2] He was in this the father of all who scientifically endeavour to arrive at the exact text of the Scriptures, the spiritual forefather of the Westcotts and Horts of our own age. And in this also he was a true child of the old Alexandria, the home of exact and minute literary scholarship.

As a thinker Origen stands pre-eminent in the early Church. He was big enough to grapple with the great problems of life and thought. He saw far and saw clearly, and above all saw fairly. One

[1] *Vide sub.* p. 59.

[2] The book was arranged in six parallel columns (hence the name Hexapla): the Hebrew, then the Hebrew in Greek letters, then the Septuagint, then the three other Greek versions.

of his charms is his candour and the honesty with which he faced difficulties and tried to get to the roots of things. He had the Alexandrian "big view of things," and along with it intense reverence. The two books of his which have come down to us which best illustrate his power in this direction, and embody many of his greatest thoughts, are: (1) his treatise *Against Celsus*, in which he states and deals with a collection of most acute and plausible objections to Christianity[1]; and (2) his *First Principles*, in which he discusses problems concerning God, the World, the Soul, and also the Scriptures, especially those elements in these questions which were real difficulties and stumbling-blocks to the men of his generation. He treats them all with a freedom and boldness

[1] The following may be taken as a specimen of the reasonable and masterly way in which Origen dealt with clever objections. It also illustrates the width of Origen's mental horizon.

The supposed lateness of the Incarnation and the alleged hole-and-corner method of it is the point under discussion. "When God sent Jesus to the human race, it was not as though He had just awakened from a long sleep; but Jesus, though He has only now for worthy reasons fulfilled the divine plan of His incarnation, has at all times been doing good to the human race. For no noble deed among men has ever been done without the Divine Word (*cf.* p. 63) visiting the souls of those who ever for a brief space were able to receive such operations of the Divine Word. Nay, even the appearance of Jesus in our corner of the world (as it seems) has been brought about for a worthy reason: since it was necessary that He of whom the prophets spoke should appear among those who had learnt one God, who read His prophets and recognised Christ preached in them, and that He should appear at a time when the Word was about to be diffused from one corner to the whole world" (*Against Celsus*, vi. 78).

which shocked the timid orthodoxy of many who came after him. But in reality his daring was often more reverent than their timidity, for it was the result of a strong faith in the loving wisdom of God and of a steadfast devotion to truth.[1]

The last twenty years of his life were spent at Cæsarea in Palestine, where he carried on his learned labours with more freedom and more sympathy[2] than latterly were his at Alexandria. He died in the Decian persecution in his sixty-ninth year, as a result of the hardships and tortures which he then underwent for the sake of the faith.

[1] The following passage from the *First Principles* may be taken to illustrate the luminous suggestiveness of Origen's treatment of a difficult and intricate question.

The dilemma is: How may Christ be said to be incapable of sin if there was in him a human and rational soul (*i.e.* a soul capable of both good and evil)? "To explore the matter, it will not appear absurd to use an illustration. . . . Iron is capable of cold or heat. If a mass of iron be kept constantly in the fire, receiving the heat through all its pores and veins, and the fire being continuous and the iron never removed from it, it becomes wholly converted into the latter. . . . If any one were to attempt to touch or handle it he would experience the action, not of cold iron, but of fire. In this way, then, that soul which, like an iron in the fire, has been perpetually placed on the Word (*cf.* p. 63) and perpetually in the Wisdom and perpetually in God, is God in all that it does, feels, and understands, and therefore incapable of sin" (*De Princ.* ii. 6).

[2] Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria, who was inimical to him, compassed his excommunication from the Church in Alexandria. The Roman Church concurred, but the Palestinian churches paid no heed. The ostensible reasons for his excommunication were alleged breaches of ecclesiastical order and unorthodoxy in certain points of doctrine.

CHAPTER IV

ALEXANDRIA (*continued*)

Alexandrian Exegesis.—The desire to harmonise Greek philosophy and Christianity had a curious connection with the Alexandrian method of interpreting the Scriptures. Although it was tentatively suggested that the divine truth in Greek philosophy might have sometimes come through the direct revelation of the "Word" to responsive heathen seekers, yet the favourite explanation was that the Greek philosophers had derived their best and truest conceptions from the Pentateuch. Even Clement spends much labour on proving this absurd thesis. If this explanation was right, then it followed that the germ at least of the teaching of Plato and Aristotle must be found in the Law and the Prophets. As it was in reality not there at all, and was indeed "conspicuous by its absence" to any one not anxious to believe it there, it was necessary to show the Old Testament writers as meaning something very different from what they actually said. In other words, Greek philosophy had to be "read into" the Old Testament Scriptures at the expense of their actual meaning. It is hardly necessary to say that those who did so

believed that they were thus elucidating the true sense. The result was a system of biblical exegesis known as the " Allegorical."

This view that the old Greek philosophers " plagiarised from Moses," as it was sometimes put, was not invented by the Christian scholars of Alexandria, though they amplified it considerably, but it was derived from the Hellenised Jews there, who had suggested it nearly a couple of centuries before the Christian era; partly out of national vanity and the desire to show their superiority to the Greeks, and partly from reasons similar to those which later moved the Christians. The idea can be traced back to the writings attributed to Aristobulus the Jew (*vide* 2 Mac. i. 10), who flourished in 160 B.C., and was tutor to the then King of Egypt, Ptolemy Euergetes.

The Alexandrian Jews, moreover, were not the actual inventors of the system of interpretation which was needful to surmount the difficulties of the " plagiarising " theory. They in their turn derived it from their heathen neighbours, the Greek inhabitants of the city. Homer's poems appealed so strongly to the Greeks that they almost took the place of a Bible for them. " Finding many lines in Homer which seemed to them unworthy, undignified, morally reprehensible, and even positively blasphemous, the Stoic allegorists set themselves to explain away all such passages as containing myths and sacred enigmas and adorable

mysteries. In carrying out their object they had recourse to etymologies, to plays on words . . . to the symbolism of numbers . . . and interminable inferences from incidental phrases. By these means there was little difficulty in making Homer speak the language of Pythagoras or of Plato." [1] The Jews, then, accepted this method of interpretation from the heathen Greeks, adapting it to the Old Testament Scriptures. Philo, in particular, made use of it and systematised it, probably doing more than any one else to popularise it not only among the Alexandrian Jews, but also among the Jews of the Dispersion, thereby doing much to Hellenise Judaism. The Christians took it over from the Jews, further adapting it to their own use, and applying it not only to the Old Testament, but also to the New Testament.

This system of interpretation appealed to the Christians, not only because of what we have stated, but also for the reason which commended it to the heathen Greeks, that it supplied a convenient method of getting rid of, or rather utilising, the many apparently awkward passages found in the Bible—awkward so long as verbal and equal inspiration were insisted upon. It has further appealed to Christendom at large, owing to the true conviction that the Scriptures are full of spiritual treasures to him who has the key to them, which treasures are not apparent in all

[1] Farrar, *Hist. of Interpretation*, p. 136.

their riches to him who sees only the surface meaning.

The leading Christian exponent of the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture was Origen. Origen had an extraordinary acquaintance with the Old and New Testaments, such as has perhaps never been surpassed by any Christian scholar even of modern times. He held that every passage of Scripture had three senses: the Somatic, or literal, the Psychic, or moral, and the Pneumatic, or spiritual; just as, according to Plato, man consists of three parts: body (*soma*), soul (*psyche*), and spirit (*pneuma*).[1] To him the literal sense was of slight importance compared with the spiritual, or, as it is sometimes termed, the "mystical." The literal meaning was to him, as it were, a cloak, half concealing, half revealing, the precious inspired Word of God. Origen frankly recognised that to take Scripture as it stands, to be literally understood as the direct utterance of God, was impossible. He pointed out that much in the Old Testament seemed immoral and unbecoming, that some things were inherently absurd, others unworthy and unjust, others impossible, and that there were many manifest anthropomorphisms; while in the Gospels he also found discrepancies, and even contradictions, and what appeared to him as trivialities.[2] These he took as advertising, by their very difficulty and literal impossibility, the fact that mystic truths

[1] *De Princ.* iv. 1.[2] *Cf.* Farrar, *Hist. of Interp.*, p. 191 ff.

underlay them. After having pointed out a number of these, he says: "The object of all these statements is to indicate that it was the design of the Holy Spirit to show that we were not to be edified by the letter alone or by everything in it, a thing which we see to be frequently impossible and inconsistent, for in that way not only absurdities, but impossibilities would be the result; but that we are to understand that certain occurrences were interwoven in this visible history, which, when considered and understood in their inner meaning, give forth a law which is advantageous to men and worthy of God.

"Let no one, however, suspect that we do not believe any history in Scripture to be real, because we suspect certain events related in it not to have taken place; or that no precepts of the law are to be taken literally, because we consider certain of them, in which either the nature or possibility of the case so require, incapable of being observed. . . . The truth of the history may and ought to be preserved in the majority of instances . . . the passages which hold good in their historical acceptation are much more numerous than those which contain a purely spiritual meaning." [1]

In commenting on the Gospel of John, however, and his disagreement with the Synoptists, he says: "I do not condemn them if they sometimes dealt freely with things which to the eye of history hap-

[1] *De Princ.* iv. 1.

pened differently and changed them so as to subserve the mystical aims they had in view. They proposed to speak the truth where it was possible both materially and spiritually, and where this was not possible it was their intention to prefer the spiritual to the material." [1] It is curious that Origen here seems to have anticipated certain modern critics and their view of the historicity of the fourth Gospel.

One or two illustrations of the application of the allegorical method will best explain it. In the course of his comments on the Triumphal Entry, Origen says: "Now Jesus is the Word of God which goes into the soul that is called Jerusalem, riding on the ass freed by the disciples from its bonds. That is to say, on the simple language of the Old Testament interpreted by the two disciples who loose it; in the first place, him who applies what is written to the service of the soul, and shows the allegorical sense of it with reference to her, and, in the second place, him who brings to light the things which be in shadow, the good and true things of the future. . . . But he does not come alone to Jerusalem, the soul, nor only with a few companions: for many things have to enter us before the Word of God which makes us perfect, and as many things have to come after Him." [2] The exquisite beauty and the precious

[1] *Commentary on John*, § 4.
[2] *Ibid.* § 18.

religious significance of the simple narrative in its historic setting is utterly lost.

Again, in his exposition of the Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, he says: "Perhaps by the five loaves they meant to make a veiled reference to the *sensible* words of the Scriptures corresponding in number on this account to the five *senses*, but by the two fishes either to the word expressed, and the word conceived, which are a relish, so to speak, to the *sensible* things contained in Scripture." [1]

A good specimen of later allegorisation of the Old Testament is to be found in Cyril of Alexandria's comment on Canticles iii. 9–11. "The palanquin," he says, "is the cross; its silver legs the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas; its purple cushion the scarlet robe with which Christ was mocked; the nuptial crown is the crown of thorns." [2]

It is evident, even from these few illustrations, how worthless and pernicious this system was. The pity is that its influence has so long been apparent in the Christian Church. Farrar, in his Bampton Lectures on *The History of Interpretation*, rightly says of it: "Allegory by no means sprang from spontaneous piety, but was the child of Rationalism [p. 193]. . . . It converts the whole of Scripture . . . into a series of clumsy, varying, and incredible enigmas [p. 196]. . . . It deadens

[1] *Commentary on Matthew.*

[2] Quoted by Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 211.

the feeling of historic truth [p. 197]. . . . It consists of application, not of explication. It ignores the human element which Scripture shows on every page. While professing to reverence the Bible it detracts from its authority, and substitutes in its place a hollow, gilded idol, which totters upon its flimsy pedestal. It foists into the Bible its own fancies, which are not there. It approaches the Bible in the interests of a system preconceived and pre-established" [p. 211].

It is not altogether fair, however, to close this sketch of Alexandrian exegesis, and in particular of Origen's contribution to biblical interpretation, on a note of depreciation. For, in spite of the truth of what has been said, Origen and the early Alexandrians expended upon the study of the Scriptures a wealth of loving and would-be reverent labour. Their theory and methods may have been misleading, but their sense of the sacredness and inexhaustible value of the Scriptures largely outweighed their mistakes. It was they who taught Christendom that it was worth while to spare no pains in searching into the treasure stores of the records of Divine Revelation, and that men who would search the Scriptures must first, like Moses, "take off their shoes from off their feet," for they were entering there on "holy ground."

Alexandrian Theology. The Logos Doctrine.—In the forefront of the theology of Alexandria was what is known as the Logos Doctrine. It would

not be true to say that the adoption of this doctrine was confined to Alexandria, for traces of it are found in almost every place where Christianity came into contact with Hellenic thought. But the Alexandrian theologians made the doctrine peculiarly their own, both developing it and working it into the warp and woof of their theology. To them it was the supreme key to the understanding of the relation of Christ to God and the universe. It has been said of Clement, for instance, that he elevated the idea of the Logos "into the highest principle in the religious explanation of the world, and in the exposition of Christianity." [1] And, if this is true of Clement, it is still more true of Origen.

The conception of the Logos was not originally Christian. It was primarily essentially Platonic, though Plato himself did not develop it very far; that was left for the later Stoics to do. (i) The Stoics recognised that a rational principle underlay the workings of the universe. This they termed the Logos, or Divine Reason. They conceived of it as being the permanent connection between the universe and the transcendent Divine Being, emanating as it did from Him. It was, in fact, the self-manifestation of the divine in the universe. (ii) The Logos was also conceived of as the "Thought of God," the idea of the universe as it existed in the Divine Mind. (iii) And, still further,

[1] C. Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 98.

it was thought of as being related especially to the rational part of man's being, the intelligence and the conscience of men being somehow considered as germs or fragments of the Logos.

Amongst those who specially developed and used these highly speculative but most attractive conceptions was the great Jewish philosopher, Philo. He combined them with Jewish teaching as to the "Memra," or "Word," and identified the Logos with the Memra. As Logos means "Word" as well as "Reason," the process was an easy one. According to the more advanced Jewish ideas, which ever tended to exalt God at the expense of His immediate relation with the world, God was not considered to act directly on the universe, either in creation or in maintenance, but did so through His Memra (Word). Closely allied to this teaching about the Memra, and at the back of it, was the conception of the "Wisdom" of God, the clearest account of which in the Old Testament is found in Prov. viii., where the Wisdom of God is described almost as a world-principle, and as a pre-requisite of creation. After the manner of the Hebrews when dealing with abstract ideas, Wisdom in this passage and elsewhere is spoken of in terms of personification, and these were eventually transferred to the Memra (Word).

Philo, then, combined the theoretical conception of the Greek philosopher's Logos (Reason = Word) with the Hebrew theologian's Memra (Word =

Wisdom) under the one term Logos; and further developed the ideas inherent in them.

According to him, God is absolute Being. The Logos is both His thought and the expression of it. Through the Logos the universe was called into being, and through the Logos alone can God be known to man. "Eternally in God, it, the Logos, has been implanted and made active in the world, and has especially disclosed itself to the Hebrews and in the Scriptures."[1]

Philo did not make it clear whether he conceived of the Logos as having an existence of its own distinct from God. Sometimes, indeed, he speaks of it as if it were a phase of the Divine Being, a manifestation of the Divine Mind. Certainly he did not conceive of it as a distinct personal entity; but, just as had been done with Wisdom and the Memra, he sometimes personifies it in his language. It is interesting to note that the terms which he used to describe the Logos are in some cases the same as those used by New Testament writers in attempting to describe Christ. The Logos is, for example, the *image* (εἰκών) of God (*cf.* Col. i. 16), the *express image* (χαρακτήρ) of God (*cf.* Heb. i. 3), God's *elder Son*, the *high-priest* of the universe.

The Christian Church at Alexandria served itself heir to Philo's doctrine of the Logos, and these ideas which we have briefly sketched out

[1] Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. iii. p. 134 (*a*).

went to form part of the general body of Christian preconceptions.

The relation of Christ to God, to the universe, and to mankind was expressed and expounded by the Alexandrian Christians in terms of their Logos Doctrine. This was done partly because of the appeal these familiar terms made to the rational and yet speculative Greek mind; partly because the theory of the Logos seemed to express and explain the convictions and beliefs about Christ, which had accumulated otherwise, without being actually systematised. But the Logos was identified with Christ chiefly because the Greek mind, when it came into contact with Jesus, was compelled to describe and explain Him in the terms of the very highest it could conceive, which was the Logos; just as the Jews had to explain Him as the Messiah, which was their highest conception. The Logos Doctrine, when applied to Christ in the hands of the Alexandrian Christians, was brilliantly and reverently developed, and was found to be infinitely fruitful and suggestive, linking Christ, as it seemed to do, with all the best in Hellenic thought and with all the truths in philosophy; and satisfying, as in a measure it did, that craving, which was nowhere more strongly felt than in Alexandria, for some manifestation of the mind of God which was always and everywhere true.

Unlike Philo's Logos, that of the Christians was

distinct from God, a truly personal being.[1] At the same time the Logos was the manifestation of the very being of God throughout the whole history of the world. Wherever and whenever God and the truth of God was manifested that was the Logos, but the supreme and perfect manifestation of the Logos was Jesus Christ.

From what has been shown so far it will be seen that Alexandrian theology was in no small degree philosophical, and had that breadth of outlook which must always attend (true) philosophy. Like most of the Greek Christians, though perhaps in a greater degree, the Alexandrians were concerned with revelation, light, and knowledge. Christ was to them primarily a revelation of God and of truth, the Saviour of men from error and ignorance rather than from sin and damnation. Their attention was concentrated on the Incarnation rather than on the Cross, and on the eternal, pre-existent Christ, the Word, rather than on Christ, the Suffering Servant.

The theologians of Alexandria were always the champions of the most exalted views of Christ. Nowhere in Christendom was more reverence,

[1] Occasionally certain of the Christian theologians lost sight of the distinct personality of the Christ-Logos, and spoke as if He was merely a manifestation of God's nature; but in so far as they did so they were departing from the distinctively Christian doctrine of the Logos. It must be confessed, however, that the Logos Doctrine, owing to its origin, did not make it very easy to emphasise either the personality of the Logos or the reality of the Incarnation.

especially intellectual reverence, paid to Him. They were ever engaged in high metaphysical speculation as to the nature of His divine essence, and ever seeking to penetrate the ineffable mystery of His being. With them indeed piety and philosophy, mysticism and metaphysics, joined hands. Their strength lay in this high and broad estimate of Christ; but their weakness, especially as time went on, lay in their tendency to set more value on the pre-existent Eternal Christ of theory than on the actual Jesus Christ of history, and in their failing to sufficiently realise that the true basis of any belief in the pre-existent Christ rested mainly on the impression which the historic Jesus made on His followers both before and after His death, by what He *was* in His earthly life.

It is because Jesus was what He was, because of those essential spiritual qualities which He embodied and lived out during His life on earth that one is forced to believe in His eternal divinity, which includes His pre-existence.

The Alexandrians, as we have seen, started on their theoretical speculations with Christ as the Eternal Word, instead of starting with Jesus and working on from all that experience shows Him to have been. Had they done so it might have saved them from a certain touch of unreality and "unconvincingness" which at times comes into their Christology, and also from occasionally losing, in some degree, the sense of His real personal value

in the eagerness to uphold His theological value. The most perfect and exalted Christ of speculation is not so satisfying to the human soul as is the living Jesus of the Gospels, nor indeed so convincing as being the divine-human link between us and God.

The Trinity.—The Alexandrian theologians were much to the fore in working out certain of the great Trinitarian doctrines, and in doing so exhibited certain of their characteristic tendencies. They led the way in investigating the problem of the relation between the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead (which to the heathen world was then one of the most attractive things about Christian teaching) and belief in the divinity of Christ, a belief by which the Christian religion must still stand or fall; for Christ has, to the Christian, a place to which none other has a right but God. They led the way in dealing with the problem, and though they did not really solve the difficulties, yet the statement of the Christian belief as to the essential relation between God the Father, and God the Son, which has been accepted by Christendom as the most satisfactory one, was directly due to the Alexandrians.

Origen was the foremost of the earlier Alexandrians who dealt with the problem, and although in some of his theories he went a little astray, yet most of the subsequent teaching which found acceptance in the Church at large was based upon

the valuble contributions made by him to the subject. His profound research paved the way and cleared the ground for all those who came after. He was later accused of Subordinationism, *i.e.* of attributing to the Son a lower place than the Father; but, as Westcott points out, the subordination which He taught was "not of essence but of person and office." [1]

Origen's greatest and most original contribution to the doctrine of the Person of Christ was his conception that the Son's relation to the Father was that of "eternal generation," or, as it has been put, "that the Son was begotten in the eternal Now." "His generation," he said, "is as eternal and everlasting as the brilliance which is produced from the sun." [2]

Bethune Baker summarises Origen's position thus: "God's very essence is love. . . . Love cannot be thought of except as giving. Goodness desires that all shall share in the highest knowledge, and so there must be some medium, some channel by which He effects the revelation of Himself. As the required organ, He chose the Logos. It is for the very purpose of revealing God that the Logos exists, and for this reason He has a personal sub-

[1] The words of Origen which were called in question are these: "The Father, holding all things together, reaches to each being, imparting to each from that which is His own, for He is Absolute. The Son is less than the Father, reaching only to rational beings, for he is second to the Father" (*De Princ.* I. 3. 5 (Gk.)).

[2] *De Princ.* I. 2. 4.

sistence side by side with the Father, and must be (if He is to reveal Him truly), as regards His being, of one essence with God. He is thus, as being the perfect image of God, the reason and wisdom of God, Himself too really God. His generation as Son is effected as the will proceeds from the mind, as the brilliance from the light, eternal and everlasting. No beginning of this generation can be conceived; it is a continuous, eternal process." [1] This account helps one to see something of the brilliant ingenuity of this thinker, the philosophic speculativeness of his methods, and also the *à priori* nature of his reasoning.

About a century after Origen's death, when the Christian world was like to be torn in sunder by controversies regarding the essential relation of the Son to the Father in the Godhead, it was from Alexandria that the champion came who finally established, in spite of the most strenuous opposition, the doctrine that the Son was of the same essence as the Father.

As we shall frequently have to refer to this great Trinitarian controversy, it may be as well to briefly explain the points at issue, though the conflict was not long confined to Alexandria, but soon involved the rest of Christendom.

Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, thinking that his Bishop Alexander was falling into the heresy of Sabellianism (*i.e.* confusion of the persons in the

[1] Bethune Baker, *Hist. of Christian Doct.* pp. 146–8.

Trinity, and the idea that they were merely aspects of one essence), endeavoured to correct him, and in so doing swung to the other extreme by overstating the difference between the Son and the Father. Not only this, but he endeavoured to popularise his ill-thought-out but plausible doctrines by setting them in the rhythm of popular drinking-songs and by other devices. He stated specifically that "there *was*, when He (the 'Son' or the 'Word') was not"; that "before He was begotten He was not"; and that "He was made out of nothing." And he asserted that "the Son of God is of a different subsistence or essence (*ousia*)" from the Father, He being "created," "changeable" and "alterable," [1] while the Father is uncreated, unchangeable, and unalterable.

When these views were pressed to their logical conclusion they in effect made the Son of God a kind of second God, indeed nothing more nor less than a demi-god. Arius and his followers (Arians, as they came to be called) still professed to worship this created being who was less than God, a position which practically involved the re-entrance of polytheism into Christian theology. Moreover, as the nature of the Son, according to the Arians, was "changeable and finite like ours, there was no need for Him to take a finite human soul," and He did "not really enter into human conditions." The doctrine of the Arians, in short, came to this,

[1] From addendum to Nicene Creed.

that Jesus Christ was neither truly God nor truly man.

Arius and his teaching were condemned at the Universal Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) chiefly on the initiative of Athanasius, a young Alexandrian deacon, who more clearly than any one else had grasped the issues at stake. At his suggestion the word *Homo-ousios* (of the self-same essence) was inserted in the creed drawn up by the Council in the description of the relation of the Son to the Father in the Godhead. Decisions even of Universal Councils do not, however, destroy erroneous and dangerous doctrines, and for the next half-century after the Nicene Council extreme Arianism and various modifications of it seemed to be in the ascendant in Christendom. Most of the rest of Athanasius's life was devoted to upholding and defending the Nicene doctrine that Christ was truly the Son of God in the highest sense possible. His watchword was *Homo-ousios* (the same in essence), that and no less. Various other terms were suggested, such as *Homoi-ousios* (*like* in essence) and *Homoios* (like); but they were all of the nature of a compromise with Arianism, and on being weighed were found wanting. After years of struggle and of bitter persecution and cruel misrepresentation from his opponents, and especially from the Ultra-Arians, Athanasius, though for a time "against the world," as it seemed, brought public opinion in Christendom over to his side, or

rather was successful in persuading Christendom to recognise the truth of the doctrine for which he stood. Gibbon says of him: "We have seldom an opportunity of observing . . . what effect may be produced or what obstacles may be surmounted by the force of a single mind when it is inflexibly applied to the pursuit of a single object. The immortal name of Athanasius will never be separate from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and faculty of his being." [1]

Later Christology.—When once the Church had dealt with the question of the complete and essential divinity of Christ, chiefly, as we have seen, by the aid of Alexandrian theologians, and next had insisted (at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381) that not only was Christ fully divine, but also fully human, the further question arose: Granted the divinity and humanity of Christ, how could the relation of the divinity and the humanity, both in all their fulness, be conceived of as in the one Incarnate Logos? What was the relation of these two elements in Christ, and how was it to be defined?

In the controversies which arose on this subject the Alexandrian theologians came into violent conflict with those of Antioch. Of the actual conflict we shall have more to say in studying Antioch and Constantinople.

The Alexandrians, in accordance with the theo-

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxi.

logical traditions of their city, ably safeguarded the belief in the divine element in the personality of our Incarnate Lord. They insisted that, in spite, as it were, of His Incarnation, Christ "remained God all the way through, the human generation in time in no way detracting from the divine generation in eternity," [1] and maintained that His human attributes in no wise interfered with, or crowded out, any of the full complement of His divine attributes.

This may be strikingly illustrated from a letter of Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, written against Nestorius, the Antiochian Patriarch of Constantinople, who had urged the due recognition of the truly human attributes of Christ, and in so doing had apparently taught that Christ had two distinct personalities, one human and one divine.[2] Cyril therein says: "We do not say that the ineffable nature of God the Word was *debased* and changed into the nature of the flesh . . . but we say that the Son of God, while visible to the eyes, and a babe and in swaddling clothes . . . filled all creation as God, and was seated with His Father." [3]

In contradistinction, then, to teaching which seemed to them to make Christ of two distinct personalities "essentially incommunicable," the

[1] *Cf.* Bethune Baker, *Early Hist. of Christian Doct.* p. 269.

[2] This was known later as the Dyoprosopic, or Nestorian Heresy.

[3] Third Epistle of Cyril to Nestorius, par. 3; *cf.* Orig. *de Princ.* II. 6. 2.

Alexandrians insisted that His personality was one, as otherwise the value of the Incarnation was lost.

They were undoubtedly right here, but nevertheless throughout the discussion which took place on this subject one cannot help noticing that the primary assumption of the Alexandrians was the divinity of Jesus Christ, *into which the humanity must be fitted somehow.* That may possibly have been true in the actual divine economy, but it is certainly not how the facts have come to us in the historic Incarnation.

In seeking thus to emphasise the oneness of the personality of the Incarnate Logos the Alexandrians and their followers fell into their characteristic error of minimising the humanity of Christ in their endeavour to exalt His divinity. It was said, for example, that the humanity was as much lost in the divinity as a drop of vinegar in the waters of the ocean. They could not rid themselves of the idea that there was something almost unworthy about humanity, even at its highest.[1]

[1] The seeds of this error had been inherent in Alexandrian theology from the first. We find it even as early as Clement, where it is probably the result of the influence which Stoic philosophy had had upon him. He says of our Lord: "That His body should demand, as body, the necessary aids of its maintenance would be absurd. For He ate, not for the sake of the body, held together as it were by a divine power, but that it might not occur, to those who were with Him, to have vain thoughts concerning Him, as indeed in later times certain persons supposed that he was manifested in mere seeming. But He Himself was absolutely impassible" (*i.e.* incapable of suffering either joy or pain). (*Strom.* vi. 9.)

Many of the extremists swung over to the belief that, not merely was there one personality in Christ, but only one nature, the human nature having been so assimilated by the divine as to be totally merged in it.

This teaching was condemned at the Fourth General Council of the Church at Chalcedon (A.D. 451), in the person of Eutyches,[1] a Constantinopolitan Archimandrite who was an enthusiastic follower of Cyril of Alexandria.[2]

At this Council it was reaffirmed that Christ had one personality and "two natures conjoined without confusion and without change, but also without rending and without separation."

In these latter controversies the Alexandrian theologians fell away sadly from the gracious spirit of their early predecessors, who used so eagerly to desire to do justice to their opponents' position, who used to take all pains to neither misunderstand nor misrepresent those with whom they disputed, who with all their zeal for the truth had attempted, and not without success, not so much to force as to woo men from error, and had exhibited patience and courtesy in all their dealings.[3]

And by this time that delight in the truth which

[1] Hence this heresy was known as "Eutychianism," or "Monophysitism," *i.e.* the doctrine of *one nature* in Christ.

[2] Cyril's successor in the Patriarchate, Dioscurus, who had supported Eutyches, was deposed by this Council.

[3] Clement, Origen, and Athanasius, to mention no others, are notable examples of this.

had been so marked a characteristic of the earlier Alexandrians had begun to degenerate into love of orthodoxy. The *odium theologicum*, so long kept at bay by the cultured and generous scholars of earlier days, came in with a rush and held the ground. Some of the later men, notably Cyril, were as able, and even profound, theologians as any of the old school, and were probably more accurate and acute; but their methods were violent, and often unfair, and were embittered by rancour and personal jealousies.

Looking back over the ground we have surveyed we find that Alexandria stood for three all-important unities: (1) The unity of all truth and revelation. (2) The essential unity of the Son and the Father. (3) The unity of the personality of the Incarnate Logos, including as it did the truly human and especially the truly divine.

On the other hand, we have seen that both in its system of biblical interpretation and its theology there was a certain pernicious tendency.

The Alexandrians, consciously or unconsciously, disparaged and attempted to disregard the human element in the revelation which comes through the Scriptures, thinking thereby to emphasise and discover the divine essence of it. Similarly, in the revelation of God which has come through the person of Jesus Christ they tended, as we have already shown, to minimise the human element, lest it should obscure His divinity. They had not

sufficiently learned the great lesson that the highest in the Divine, God's love and holiness, in short the Character and the Heart of God, cannot normally be seen and realised save through and by means of the human, not in spite of it. God was more, not less, expressed by the Incarnation, with all its humiliations and limitations, than He had been, or could have been, before it.

Yet, on the whole, in spite of such mistakes and shortcomings, perhaps no Church has made more splendid contributions to Christian theology and Bible-study than the earlier Alexandrian and its brilliant band of reverent and spiritually minded scholars, with their hearts and minds devoted to Christ the Word, in whom they found the supreme revelation of the Father to themselves and to all mankind.

CHAPTER V

ANTIOCH

UNLIKE the cities which we have already discussed, Antioch never really took first rank in the Christian Church, either in the Christian community at large or among the Eastern Churches. It was much to the fore in New Testament days, so that it became a serious rival to Jerusalem; but eventually, as we have seen, it was upon Ephesus, not Antioch, upon which the mantle of Jerusalem fell, Antioch receding into the background for a time. Later, during the fourth and fifth centuries, the "Queen of the East," as Antioch used to be called, came to the fore again, this time as the rival of Alexandria.

The characteristics of Antioch are best seen by comparison and contrast with these two cities.

Like Alexandria, Antioch was a comparatively modern city, which came into being as a result of the conquest and colonising policy of Alexander the Great. It was actually built about 300 B.C. by one of Alexander's generals, Seleucus Nicator, who became master of the new "Greek" kingdom of Syria. Seleucus named it after his father Antiochus, and made it his capital. It was added

to and embellished by most of his successors, especially by the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes, the arch-persecutor of the Jews. In 64 B.C., at the breaking up of the kingdom of Syria, it was captured by Pompey, and thus came into the Roman Empire.

The city was situated about a score of miles up the river Orontes. It was beautifully laid out and abounded in fine buildings, many of them lavishly gilded. The finest street was built by Herod the Great. This was no less than four miles long, with wonderful porticoes running the whole way along each side of it, supported by rows of splendid columns.

Even more famous was the wonderful pleasure suburb Daphne, which was linked to the city by a district crowded with handsome villas and beautiful gardens. Daphne itself was a dream of loveliness. All that the art of man could devise was made use of to enhance its rich natural beauties. Leafy groves, charming gardens, murmuring fountains, scented flowers, marble terraces, and stately temples, all the glories of colour and form cunningly grouped together, ravished the eye at every turn. The artistic, beauty-loving spirit of the Greeks in conjunction with the sensuousness of the oriental had there full play.

The inhabitants of the city were mostly either of Syrian or Jewish extraction, but of Greek habits and language. They were each and all

devoted to pleasure, and theirs was the gayest city of the ancient world. Sports and amusements of all kinds bulked largely in the lives and thoughts of the citizens. They loved the excitement of the theatre, and were especially devoted to horse-racing.[1] Laughter-loving and luxurious, brilliant and often shallow, they were famous for their gay humour and their loose morals. *Daphnici mores* were notorious the world over. Intellectually they were keen of understanding and quick to see a point, what the Scots would call "gleg o' the uptak." They were quick-witted and clear-brained. The man in the street was as "smart" as a Cockney, while the Antiochian scholar was as acute a thinker as a Parisian professor. Their literature was polished, artistic, and epigrammatic. Though quite as clever as the Alexandrians, they did not take their learning so seriously. They were broad rather than deep, rationalist rather than idealist.

[1] As Gibbon puts it: "The love of spectacles was the taste, or rather passion, of the Antiochian Syrians; the most skilful 'artists' were procured from the adjacent cities; a considerable share of the revenue was devoted to public amusements; and the magnificence of the games of the theatre and circus was considered as the happiness and as the glory of Antioch" (*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxiv.).

St. Chrysostom frequently refers to this extravagant interest of his fellow-citizens in amusement and sport. He says, *e.g.*: "Is it not strange that those who sit by the market can tell the names and families and cities of charioteers and dancers and the kinds of powers possessed by each, and can give exact account of the good or bad qualities of the very horses, but that those who come hither . . . should know nothing of what is done here, but should be ignorant of the number even of the sacred books?" (Homily on Gospel of John, par. 32).

They were, too, less fanatical than the Alexandrians, and when they rioted, as they were prone to do, it was often through sheer excitability, or at most for some ephemeral reason. There was rarely the grim determination and settled intention shown by Alexandrian mobs.

Perhaps they were saved from long fits of fanaticism by their sense of humour. The Antiochians made fun of everything. It was they who first invented a nickname for the disciples of Christ (Acts xi. 26). Nothing escaped their irreverent and often scurrilous wit. They even dared to jest at their monarchs. Once, when the Emperor Julian the Apostate took up his abode in the city, he incurred the dislike and scorn of the citizens by his attempt to reintroduce the glories of heathen worship, which had faded away before Christianity, and also by his advocacy of the old heathen philosophic ideal of asceticism in opposition to the luxurious and pleasure-loving habits of the place. The result was a flood of impudent lampoons and satirical songs ridiculing the Emperor, his religion, his personal habits, and even his long beard, which as a would-be philosopher he wore. Apparently these were hawked in the street, and publicly sung without interference on the part of the authorities.

The city rocked with laughter. Julian, foolish man, wrote a book called *The Enemy of the Beard* (*Misopogon*) in answer to these insults, in his turn

attempting to satirise the Antiochians! This reply he actually had posted on the gates of the palace. His last words to Antioch, as he shook from his feet the dust of the impertinent city, forcibly describe its characteristic faults: "I turn my back upon a city full of vices, insolence, drunkenness, incontinence, impiety, and impudence."

But the description is not altogether a fair one. The Antiochians were certainly a pleasure-loving people, and no respecters of persons; but their treatment of Julian was not merely due to love of luxury or to sheer clever impudence. Julian, during his visit, had made the most strenuous attempts to revive the worship of the gods in the temples of the city, and especially in its suburb Daphne, and it was this as much as anything which stirred the people to a satirical mood. To them this afforded, as it were, a final exhibition of the silliness of heathen superstition and of the ridiculous futilities of heathen worship. Most other cities clung to Paganism because it was old and venerable, and finally gave it up perforce, and with lingering regret. Not so in Antioch; there it was collapsing, pierced by the shafts of ridicule and of keen common sense. It was being laughed out of court as obsolete and absurd. And not even the offer of imperial favour could stay the laughter. The Antiochians may not perhaps have been very serious-minded, but at least they could not abide anything that savoured of pretence and unreality in their religion.

Perhaps the most representative embodiment of this characteristic frame of mind was the Greek Syrian, Lucian of Samosata, one of the wittiest of all the writers of antiquity (born A.D. *c.* 120). Although not actually a native of Antioch, he was for some time a citizen of the place, and is closely identified with it. A description which has been given of him,[1] might equally well stand for that of Antioch personified: "For cool common sense and determination to see everything in its naked reality apart from the disturbing influences of hope, fear, enthusiasm, or superstition, he has never in any age been surpassed." He said of himself: "I am a hater of imposture, juggling, lies, and ostentation." And he applied himself to pillorying these features in the religions and philosophies of his times. He had reverence for nothing but reality, and even that had to be tested by a jest.

Not much later[2] than the duel of wits with Julian, the Antiochians, in a corn-riot, insulted another Emperor, Theodosius, by pulling down his statues and those of his deceased wife. According to the laws this was a treasonable offence, and but for the pleading of Flavian the bishop, the foolish city would have been humbled to the dust.

But the flippant insolence which characterised this people met its doom at last, for by their sar-

[1] By J. R. Mozley, in *Murray's Dict. of Christ. Biog.*
[2] A.D. 387.

casms they so irritated a Persian King who besieged their city that, when he captured the place, he set fire to it, and carried away the inhabitants captive in a body. The city was partially restored by Justinian, but never really recovered from this last blow.

Beginning of Christianity at Antioch.—The history of the beginnings of the Church at Antioch is found in the Acts of the Apostles. It was first evangelised by some of those "that were scattered abroad at the persecution that arose about Stephen" (Acts xi. 19).

It appears that elsewhere the Christian evangelists confined their attention to Jews only, "but when they were come to Antioch some of them spoke to the Grecians,[1] and a great number of them believed."

So at Antioch was formed the first Gentile congregation, or at least the first Christian congregation that was not distinctly Jewish. Antioch was a fit cradle for the infant Gentile Church. The seeds of universalism which were sown by our Lord germinated with difficulty in the hearts of His Palestinian disciples, with their strong national

[1] There is a disputed reading here; the weight of manuscript authority is on the side of Ἑλληνιστάς, which might merely mean Greek-speaking Jews as opposed to Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Jews. But the Jews who were evangelised in Phenice, and especially in Cyprus, would for the most part be Hellenists also. It seems, therefore, that the less well-attested reading Ἕλληνας, *i.e.* Greek-speaking Gentiles, must be the right one. The other is quite pointless. Ἑλληνιστάς, B D² E H L P, etc. Ἕλληνας ℵ AD.

and parochial prejudices, but they found congenial soil in Antioch, with its free and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Race was less a barrier to privilege there than almost anywhere else. The Jews, for example, had lived there on equal terms with the Greeks ever since the founding of the city.

The Jerusalem Church heard of what had taken place, and sent Barnabas, a Hellenistic Jew belonging to Cyprus, to investigate and report. When Barnabas saw what was going on he gladly recognised that the work was of God. Not long afterwards he brought Paul from Tarsus, which was not very far distant, and associated him in the work of building up the Church at Antioch.

The Church grew so rapidly that in a very short time it received recognition from the citizens at large in the shape of the half-contemptuous, half-playful nickname, Christians, *i.e.* Messiah-men; while, within little more than a year, it was not only self-supporting monetarily, but was able to send substantial help to the Mother-Church at Jerusalem.

Generous with money, the Christians of Antioch soon showed themselves generous also with the gospel. They must share what they valued so highly themselves. The thirteenth chapter of Acts tells how Antioch became the first foreign missionary Church. Barnabas and Saul were there ordained to the work of proclaiming the gospel to the natives of other lands, Jewish and heathen

alike. It was Antioch to which they returned at the completion of their memorable missionary journey—Antioch, whence, as Luke reminds his readers, they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work they had fulfilled. And when they were come and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. Some of the conservative and cautious members of the Jerusalem Church, when they heard of this apparently revolutionary procedure of the Antiochian congregation, were shocked, and journeyed to Antioch to put a stop to it if possible. Finally Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to lay the whole matter before the apostles and elders there. It is interesting to notice that they made the most of their opportunity by holding a series of missionary meetings all along the route, which created great interest and enthusiasm (Acts xiv. 26–xv. 4).

The first Synod of Jerusalem was then held (A.D. 51), at which, after much discussion, and disagreement, the Mother-Church consented that the Gentiles might enter the Church of Christ otherwise than by the gate of Judaism, provided that they complied with certain conditions. Paul and Barnabas, together with special delegates from the conference, returned to Antioch, and reported this decision, which was there received with great joy. This enthusiasm for foreign missionary work

is one of the finest characteristics of the Church at Antioch. It was from there rather than from Jerusalem that the command "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" was fulfilled. The Jerusalem Church was, as we have seen, cumbered with too much reverence for the past, it was clogged by tradition and conservatism. The Antiochians, on the contrary, never could recognise any sacredness in "use and wont" and in mere antiquity; they were pioneer workers and pioneer thinkers, and had all the freedom, and sometimes the apparent rudeness and irreverence, of such.

No Church of early days reflected so well the mind of St. Paul in his great conception of "neither Jew nor Greek in Christ." And it is probably also fair to suggest that in this Paul may likewise have been reflecting the mind of the Antiochian Church.

The last we hear of Antioch in Acts is in connection with Paul's third missionary journey (xviii. 23).

We know little more about the history of the Church there except the probably erroneous tradition that Peter was Bishop there for two years (*cf.* Gal. ii. 11). It is probably connected with two books of the New Testament, viz. the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. For there are strong reasons for believing that St. Luke himself was a native of the city.

The School of Antioch.—As at Alexandria, so at

Antioch, there was a famous school of Christian learning. It was not, however, as at Alexandria, so much a recognised institution with regularly appointed teachers as a succession of brilliant scholars and thinkers. These were not all professional teachers, but most of them had many followers and disciples. The characteristics of this school were as well marked as those of that at Alexandria, and were of almost exactly opposite tendencies. The Alexandrian school was, as we have already seen, speculative and mystical in its tendencies; the Antiochian, on the other hand, had a strong bent towards the scientific and the rational. Consequently there was room for much misunderstanding between the scholars and theologians of the two great cities.

Although apparently so utterly different from the Alexandrian, it seems probable that the Antiochian scholars were in the direct line of intellectual succession from Origen. The amazing thoroughness of his scholarship, especially with regard to the text of the Bible, and also the principles of exact thought which he was at so much pains to inculcate, must have given no little stimulus to the Christian students in Syria during his long residence in Cæsarea. At all events, these were among the outstanding qualities of the Antiochian school, which began to come into prominence some twenty or thirty years after Origen's death. The spirit of free inquiry in matters of religious interest

which also distinguished Origen was likewise typical of the Antiochian theologians.[1]

The founder of the school is said to have been Malchion, who flourished in the second half of the third century. Besides his work in connection with the Church, Malchion was president of the faculty of rhetoric in Antioch, and as such was a professional scholar and teacher of no small repute and distinction.

After him came Dorotheus (*fl.* A.D. 296) and Lucian (A.D. 240–312), who were together at the head of the school of theology. It was these two, and especially Lucian, who first gave the school its distinctive features. Under Lucian were trained Arius, the arch-heretic,[2] and not a few others with similar views, among them the celebrated Eusebius of Nicomedia. Lucian's own theology was looked upon as "unsound" for a considerable time; but in his later years he apparently became more conservative in his views, or else was able to make his ecclesiastical superiors and compeers understand that what he really stood for was not subversive of the Christian faith. He died a martyr in full communion with the Church, held in much esteem for his brave Christian testimony. He and Dorotheus (who was skilled in Hebrew),

[1] It is possible that Pamphilus, Origen's pupil, who formed the Ecclesiastical Library and the School at Cæsarea, may have been a personal link connecting Origen with the earliest of the Antiochian school.

[2] *Vide* p. 72.

amongst other scholarly labours, produced a revised version of the Septuagint which was accepted over nearly all the Greek-speaking East.

The next shining light of the school was Diodorus, who became Bishop of Tarsus A.D. 379. Apart from his work as a teacher and scholar, Diodorus did splendid work in defence of the faith, first against the Arians, and then against the attempts of the apostate Emperor Julian to reintroduce Paganism.

When the Arians were in the ascendency he was hunted and persecuted, and had many adventures as he endeavoured to minister to the folk who still clung to the Catholic faith. Like so many of the Antiochian religious leaders, he was a magnificent orator. Chrysostom likens his oratory to a trumpet for power and to a lyre for melody. But his chief claim to fame lay in his exegetical work, and the healthy common-sense methods he inculcated. He died revered by the whole Church; but later, as with so many of his school, his teaching was reckoned heretical.

The most famous of all the Antiochians were Diodorus's two pupils, John Chrysostom (A.D. 367–407) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 350–428), both of whom outshone their master, Chrysostom as a preacher, and Theodore of Mopsuestia as an exegete and interpreter of the Scriptures.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, in his turn, was succeeded (1) by his disciple Theodoret (A.D. 393–458), who excelled as an exegete and commentator, fol-

lowing closely in Theodore's own footsteps, with more caution but less genius; and (2) by Nestorius, who over-emphasised Theodore of Mopsuestia's theological tendencies, with the consequence that he fell into heresy himself, and thus unfortunately brought Theodore and the whole Antiochian school into permanent disrepute.

As was also the case in Alexandria, the most distinctive features of the Antiochian school lay (1) in their treatment of the Scriptures, and (2) in their Christology.

Interpretation of the Scriptures.—The exegesis of the Antiochians was based on sound common-sense principles, being opposed on the one hand to the allegorical interpretation of Alexandria, and on the other to crude literalism. They aimed primarily at finding out what the inspired writers originally meant to say. To this end they used all the aids at their disposal derived from grammar, philosophy, and history. They believed that the real meaning of the Scriptures could thus be arrived at, and only thus. While regarding the Bible as the Word of God, they nevertheless recognised the human element in it. They searched the Scriptures, not to see what they could read into them, but to discover what was really there. Instead of treating the Bible as a collection of isolated texts, each to be interpreted independently, they endeavoured to treat each book in it as a whole. The contexts

of passages were specially noted, the authorship, date, and circumstances of writing were carefully studied. The personality of the writers, when it could be discovered, and their idiosyncrasies of thought and language, were investigated and taken into account. Much stress was laid on tracing sequence of thought, and on working out the arguments of the authors, especially in the case of St. Paul's Epistles ; while great care was displayed in the endeavour to bring out the points in parables and discourses. Difficulties were treated with intellectual courtesy and fairness, and not as opportunities for ingenious explaining away, as at Alexandria. In fact the Antiochian scholars showed the true scientific spirit—that spirit of free inquiry and of honest and painstaking investigation, which is determined to get at all the facts so far as it is possible to know them, and to arrive at their significance, whatever their result on preconceived notions. They were before their time, and, like most independent pioneer thinkers, they were esteemed dangerous by the rest of Christendom ; consequently, the voice of Antioch was soon stifled. Undoubtedly they made some mistakes and occasionally came to wrong conclusions ; but, for all that, it had been well for Christendom had their principles of biblical interpretation had a fair trial in the Church at large. The Antiochian scholars and teachers were undoubtedly the true forerunners of the biblical scholars of to-day,

whose methods have so enriched our knowledge of the Scriptures and our understanding of them.

The most famous of Antiochian exegetes was, as we have already noted, Theodore of Mopsuestia, the disciple of Diodorus. He, too, was the best representative of the distinctive theological tendencies of Antioch. As such some account of him is necessary.

Theodore of Mopsuestia.—Theodore was born about A.D. 350. He came of a wealthy Antiochian family. In his youth he studied under Libanius, the famous heathen sophist of Antioch, who was so much admired by the Emperor Julian. Under him he acquired his secular learning. Chrysostom was his fellow-student under Libanius, as later under Diodorus. Theodore entered on the study of the Bible with extraordinary fervour. This period of theological and biblical study was also one of great spiritual advancement. His work was carried on in a spirit of intense devotion. The young student was filled with great joy—with almost light-hearted gaiety—as he came to realise increasingly what the service of Christ meant. About this time he fell in love with a beautiful girl called Hermione, and would have married her. Theodore's companions had, however, enthusiastically included celibacy as among their ideals for the highest Christian service; so also, in all probability, had Theodore, before he met Hermione.

His projected marriage was looked upon as a fall from grace by his friends, and an unfaithfulness to the cause of the kingdom of Christ. Eventually they persuaded him to renounce Hermione and to take the Church as his bride. But the incident left its mark on him; his sunny gladness left him, and afterwards, in his writings at least, his intellect more than dominated his heart. He is strangely reserved where the more tender and sacred emotions are concerned, apparently almost unsympathetic. Nevertheless, to his friends he seems to have been a singularly lovable man. One of them, writing to him many years after, when both were middle-aged men, bears witness to this, saying how he "could never forget Theodore's love, so genuine and warm, so sincere and guileless, a love maintained from endless years and manifested but now" (Chrys. *Ep.* 212; quoted by Swete, *M.D.C.B.*); and again, how, "exile as he is, he reaps no ordinary consolation from having such a treasure, such a mine of wealth within his heart, as the love of so vigilant and noble a soul" (Chrys. *Ep.* 204). Theodore had a third period of training for his life's work, this time in pastoral work with Flavian, Bishop of Antioch. This stood him in good stead during the last thirty-six years of his life, when he was Bishop of Mopsuestia, a town some fifty miles from Antioch. He is said to have been an indefatigable worker for the good of his people, and to have been instrumental in "converting Mop-

suestia to the truth." [1] The sphere of his influence extended far beyond the limits of his bishopric. So great was his reputation as an exponent of Scripture and as a leader of Christian thought that, as his follower Ibas says, he was universally looked upon as "herald of the truth and doctor of the Church"; while "even distant Churches received instruction from him."

True to the traditions of the Antiochian Church, he was an enthusiast with regard to missionary work. One of his books, now unfortunately lost, was "written in the interests of Christian missions." He died in 428, after a strenuous life of pastoral and literary labour, full of years and honour, "in the peace of the Church, and in the height of a great reputation." [2]

Of Theodore as a theologian we shall have to treat presently. He was engaged in theological controversies during most of his life; but, while he was alive, his orthodoxy was hardly challenged, and certainly he himself never dreamed of being anything but a champion of orthodoxy. He was, in fact, looked upon by the Church at large as one of the leading exponents of its doctrines. But after his death, and especially after the indiscretion of Nestorius, his teaching was attacked with the utmost virulence, and every effort made by those of the Alexandrian way of thinking to discredit it. At the Council of Ephesus, when Nestorius was

[1] Especially from Arianism.

[2] *Facund.* ii. 2.

condemned, Theodore's creed was condemned too, but without mentioning his name. Indeed, at that time he was still so much venerated in the East that his condemnation would have been impossible. "We believe as Theodore believed; long live the faith of Theodore," was a cry which was still often raised in the Churches.

But about a century after his death, so great was the detestation of Nestorianism, that at the fifth General Council of Constantinople (A.D. 553) Theodore was anathematised as one of the parents of that so-called heresy. With the condemnation of his theology was at the same time combined that of his exegesis.

It was, however, as an interpreter of Scripture that Theodore stood supreme amongst the scholars of his day. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that he was the greatest Christian exegete before the Reformation. In after-days, when he was banned as a heretic by the Greek Churches, and his very name was anathema, he was known by those who still valued his works as "the Interpreter" *par excellence*. As a writer he is distinguished for his bold independence and keen common sense. Although brilliant and original as a thinker and scholar, he was unusually painstaking and thorough, while his works were marked by an intellectual sincerity all too rare in his time. His mind was clear and analytic, rather than speculative, and, though he went deep, he never

had the vagueness which somewhat vitiated the profundity of the Alexandrians. His virility, independence, and honesty constitute his strength. "He was a Voice, not an Echo; a voice amid thousands of echoes, which repeated only the emptiest sounds." [1] "His was the firmness of a man conscious that he represents a great principle, and fully convinced of its truth." [2]

Theodore was a determined opponent of the allegorical methods of interpretation in vogue in Alexandria, and he specially attacked Origen's exegetical theories and methods. He was convinced that wholesale allegorising undermined the historic truth of the Scripture narrative. Although he held strongly to the inspiration of the Scriptures, he believed that the best way to arrive at their true meaning was to treat them as human documents. Inspiration, according to his idea, was "ethical rather than pathological," and consisted in a divine enrichment and ennoblement of the personalities of the sacred writers, such as enabled them to grasp something of the truth of God, and understand something of His character and His purpose. He endeavoured, therefore, to study the individual writers of the Bible, and to understand their circumstances, to grasp their thoughts and intentions. In dealing with a book of the Bible, he set before him such questions as: Who wrote it? Why, when, where, how was it written?

[1] Farrar, *Hist. of Interp.* p. 215. [2] Swete, *M.D.C.B.*

And in his interpretation of its contents he would try to take these things into account. "His highest merit was his constant endeavour to study each passage as a whole, and not as an isolated congeries of separate texts. He first considers the sequence of thought, then examines the phraseology of the separate clauses, and finally furnishes us with an exegesis which is often brilliantly characteristic and profoundly suggestive." [1]

One of Theodore's earliest commentaries was on the Psalms, and, though he himself acknowledged that it was a somewhat ill-considered effort on his part, it is nevertheless characteristic. He examined the Psalm-titles, and denied their genuineness. The Psalms themselves he treated historically. Not a few of them he considered to be Maccabean (thus forestalling modern scholarship), while of those which were popularly held to be Messianic he admitted only three or four as directly referring to the Messiah and His times.

Theodore held that the essence of Old Testament prophecy lay rather in inspired hope than in conscious prediction. But the historical facts related in the Old Testament seemed to him, by divine arrangement, to be in some sort a foreshadowing of the future. "The words of psalmists and prophets were, to his mind, constantly Christological, because the events to which they relate found a perfect counterpart in Christ." [2]

[1] Farrar, *Hist. of Interp.* p. 215. [2] Swete, *M.D.C.B.*

He wrote commentaries on most of the books of the Old Testament, nearly all of which have now disappeared.[1] But his best work was done on the books of the New Testament. Of these, his commentaries on St. John and on the minor Epistles of St. Paul are still extant in translations, and it is on them that our descriptions of his exegetical merits is mainly based.

Considering how many books Theodore wrote, and the outstanding worth of many of them, surprisingly few have come down to us. This is mainly due to the fact of his posthumous condemnation as a heretic, which led to a deliberate attempt to suppress his writings as dangerous to orthodoxy. Nevertheless, prohibited though they were, his works have formed the basis of many later commentaries, in some of which they have been partly embodied verbatim but anonymously. Most of them were translated into Syriac, and some into Latin.

Antiochian Theology.—The theology of the Antiochians was distinguished by a determination not to be dazzled by the halo which theological reverence, and it might be superstition, had placed about the features of our Lord. Superstition had done the same for the gods of the heathen, and they had been found worthless enough when stripped of their conventional glamour. It seemed only fair

[1] Theodore's *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* is still preserved. His other O.T. works exist only in fragments.

that He should be tested in like manner, if only so that His real worth might shine forth the brighter. Some of the Antiochians, it is true, in refusing to look at the halo, shut their eyes to the inner radiance that would reveal itself through His manhood. But most of them were the better able to appreciate the real glory and value of the human life of the Christ.

The Antiochian School accepted the Logos doctrine in its general outline, but the Logos did not loom so large in their theological consciousness as did the historic Jesus of the Gospels, especially of the Synoptic Gospels. On the whole, they were not so prominently concerned with the working out of the question of the relation of the Word or Son to the Father in the Godhead as were the Alexandrians. Although there was little or no leaning towards denying that the Logos which became incarnate in Jesus was in the highest sense divine—" very God of very God "—some of them were inclined not to press for the exact definition of the relation of the Son to the Father. For instance, Meletius, who was one of the Bishops of the city during the troublous times of the Arian controversy, " took care not to venture on too nice distinctions," and " even rebuked the speculative pride which affected to know and determine too much concerning these incomprehensible things." [1]

[1] Neander, *Hist. of Christian Church*, vol. iv. p. 75.

The most prominent and representative members of the Antiochian school were nevertheless in sympathy with the Nicene doctrine—in the fourth century one had perforce to take one side or another —and preached it clearly, often in the face of opposition and persecution.[1] That Christ was the Son of God Incarnate, and that the Son of God was " of the same essence " as the Father, was, then, to all intents and purposes, taken for granted in the distinctive Antiochian doctrine.

The special contribution of the Antiochian theologians to Christian doctrine came along the line of the question of the relation of the divine and the human in Christ. The Alexandrians, in thinking out the problem, began, as it were, with the Logos and worked down to the man Jesus. The Antiochians, on the other hand, began with the man Jesus and worked up to the Logos, though both were convinced that in our Lord there were united in some way both God and man. Alexandria tended to lay the emphasis on Him as Son of God, while Antioch viewed Him specially as Son of Man, as a rule in no way consciously belittling His true divinity.

In the study of the person of our Lord we find, at Antioch, two determining factors closely linked together: firstly, the spirit of free inquiry

[1] Of those whom we have specially mentioned, Lucian (*cf.* p. 92) alone, the teacher of Arius, is suspected, and that probably erroneously, of having held views which were like those of Arius.

untrammelled so far as possible by convention; secondly, the historical, grammatical method of biblical exegesis such as has been described.

The simple, common-sense interpretation of the gospel narrative made it difficult not to recognise in the sacred records the portrayal of a certain process of development in Jesus, which seemed to correspond in some way with what is found in ordinary human nature. This recognition of an element of progress, growth, and development in the inner life of Jesus helped in no small degree to give Antiochian theology its peculiar bent, for good or for ill. Theodore of Mopsuestia, for instance, maintained that it was "impossible not to recognise in Christ a progressive development, by means of conflict and trial, without pronouncing the evangelic record a fable, and that all this was moreover necessarily required in order to complete the work of redemption." [1]

[1] Neander, *Hist. of Christian Ch.*, vol. iv. p. 114.

In this connection the importance assigned by the Antiochians to the Humanity of our Lord in His redemptive work should be noticed: "The Antiochians gave a very high place to mankind in God's scheme of things. To them one of the most important essential things in human nature was free-will and the capacity for choosing either good or evil. Theodore held that man was 'the crowning work of the Creator,' that 'that man was destined to manifest God, who was represented by him as by an image to the entire creation.' 'The present life is a wholesome discipline, affording room for the exercise of free-will and the attainment of goodness, which without our effort would be destitute of moral worth. Although human nature is free, it is insufficient to conquer the force of evil and attain perfect virtue without supernatural aids. The mission of Christ is primarily to restore the shattered unity of the *kosmos*, and gather up all things to

The first occasion, after apostolic days, in which the Church at Antioch came into prominence with regard to theological matters was in the case of its Bishop, Paul of Samosata, who was arraigned for heresy and finally deposed. We find that he had specially emphasised the indications of some kind of development in Christ; but, according to his peculiar theory, Christ began as a mere human being, and gradually progressed upward from humanity to divinity. He was not therefore God by nature, but by progressive development. Three large synods were held with regard to him between A.D. 264 and 269. At the first two of these he managed to defend himself, or at least to conceal his views with some success; but at the third his departure from the generally accepted teaching of the Church was clearly proved by Malchion who, as we have before said,[1] was probably the first of the famous line of Antiochian exegetes and theologians.

These ill-balanced views of Paul exaggerated the true Antiochian position so much as to be almost a caricature, and it is small wonder that he was condemned. Nevertheless, Malchion and his successors did not discard the truth that there

Himself by realising in His person the position of man as the visible image of God and the head of the whole creation, and to restore mankind by union with Himself. To fulfil this mission it was necessary that God the Word should become perfect man in possessing a rational human soul, capable of exercising a real choice between good and evil, and entering into conflict with the passions of the human soul" (Swete, *M.D.C.B.*).

was some kind of growth and development in Jesus, even though they emphatically denied the correctness of the theory that it pointed to Jesus as having begun as "mere man." Unfortunately, Paul's error and its condemnation made the rest of the Christian Church swing away even from what was true in his teaching, and made it afraid to face what were really among the precious facts of our Lord's sacred life on earth. While the theory that Christ, to begin with at least, was a mere man was emphatically repudiated by Antioch, her theologians continued to study the manhood of our Lord with reverent and appreciative interest, and attempted to shape their doctrine of Christ in accordance with a full recognition of His complete humanity. To them He represented manhood at its highest, holiest, and fullest, and they loved to dwell on the reality of His kinship with the rest of mankind, and on the high hopes which that implied for men. His hunger and thirst; His weariness and pain; His sense of disappointment; His dread of the cross; the fact that of some things He was ignorant, and, above all, the fact that His temptations were intensely real—all enhanced for them the value of the Incarnation, and formed some of their favourite objects of contemplation. They refused to explain them away or to minimise them because *à priori* it seemed impossible that such features could be found in One whom they believed likewise to be the

very Word of God. For some thinkable explanation of the union of the Divine Word with this fully human soul, which could suffer and be tempted and which developed and progressed through trials and conflict, they turned to the analogy of the relation of God with rational beings generally, and especially to His union with the souls of believers. They tried, in fact, in true scientific fashion to work from the known to the unknown. In so doing they differed from the Alexandrian theologians inasmuch as these "endeavoured to give distinctness and prominence to those points alone in which the union of God and humanity in Christ differed entirely from every other kind of union into which God enters with man." [1]

The Antiochians, however, "presumed in no wise to derive and explain the existence of Christ from the ordinary course of the development of human nature." [2] They recognised that the lower analogy of God in believers held good only so far and no further. "I am not so mad," Theodore said, "as to affirm that the indwelling of God in Christ is after the same manner as that by which He dwells in prophets and apostles." And he held that "the indwelling of God in Christ, and in the saints, is generally the same, but with an all-important specific difference," [3] for the indwelling of God in Christ was *as in a son.*

[1] Neander, *Hist. of Christian Ch.*, vol. iv. p. 121. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] Swete, *M.D.C.B.*

Theodore's position, which was also the position of his school in general, is summed up by Neander as follows: "He wished to frame to himself, after the analogy of human nature and his contemplation of the life of Christ, a definite conception of that which is to be understood by Christ as God-man in His earthly appearance. The progressive deifications of the human nature in Christ up to the time of His ascension to glory he contemplated as a consequence and effect of the original and hidden union—the very end for which God had appropriated the human nature even from its birth; but this union, existing from the first and presupposed through the whole life of Christ, by virtue of His constantly victorious conflict, revealed itself in a gradually progressive manner in its effects, as the orderly process of the development of human nature required. By virtue of that union He developed His human faculties, both moral and intellectual, far more rapidly than other men; hence in His temptations He was not left to Himself, but came off victorious by means of this union, although not without the co-operation of His own free-will." [1]

This manner of thinking and reasoning tended to make the human soul of Christ distinct from the Logos in Him, however close and unique might be the union between them. An over-statement of the case easily made it appear as if in Christ

[1] Neander, *Hist. of Christian Ch.*, vol. iv. p. 11.

were two distinct personalities: the human person, Jesus, and the divine person, the Logos. Diodorus, Theodore's teacher, drew in fact a distinction between "Him who according to his essence was God of God—the eternal Logos—and Him who through divine decree and adoption became Son of God. The one was Son of God by nature, the other by grace." [1] It therefore seemed as if in the person of Christ there were two Sons of God combined! [2]

Such teaching was not considered heretical in the case of Diodorus, but very similar statements on the part of Nestorius, the follower of Theodore, not only drew condemnation upon the head of Nestorius himself, but also unfortunately brought the distinctive teaching of the Antiochian school into permanent disrepute.

Nestorius, when Patriarch of Constantinople, at all costs insisted on maintaining a clear distinction between the divine and the human in Christ, though he fully admitted that there was a unique union of both elements, both of them in their fulness, in Him. A sketch of the circumstances is given in the chapter on Constantinople. Nestorius was accused of being a follower of Paul of Samosata, while Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, partly from jealousy towards the upstart patriarchate of

[1] Venables, *M.D.C.B.*

[2] Theodore, however, expressly repudiated this conception of two Sons; so, for that matter, did Nestorius himself.

Constantinople, partly from the constitutional inability of Alexandrian theologians to understand the Antiochian point of view,[1] subjected him to a determined and virulent attack, in which he certainly did less than justice to Nestorius's position.

The upshot of it all was that Nestorius was condemned as a heretic, and the doctrine that in Christ there were two distinct personalities "conjoined but not united" was specially pronounced anathema at the General Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431). If Nestorius really emphasised the distinction between the divine and the human in Christ to such an extent as to exclude a vital and indissoluble union between the two it was right that the Church should mark its disapproval of such doctrine. There is no doubt that it was quite possible to exaggerate his teaching, and that of his school generally in that direction. But it becomes clearer, the more that his work is studied, that he had no intention of ever suggesting that the chasm between God and man had not really been bridged over in the Incarnation. The same may be said of all the leading teachers of the Antiochian school.

The condemnation of Nestorius was unjustly procured, but it eventually had the effect, as we have already said, of discrediting the school of Antioch, and especially its great master Theodore, in the greater part of Christendom. Only in the

[1] The Antiochians found it just as difficult to understand the Alexandrian outlook.

East, beyond the Empire, did its influence continue to be felt and its teaching to be appreciated until finally, as the centuries passed, that too degenerated into a mere orthodoxy and became moribund, as all live truth that becomes thus stereotyped must do.

The great glory of this Church was its intellectual honesty and freedom, both in biblical interpretation and in its doctrine of Christ.

Its method of biblical interpretation is the only one in the early Church which has borne the test of time. Its Christian doctrine had undoubtedly its weak points—it was inadequate in its statement of the union of the human and the divine in Christ—but in its insistent recognition of the reality of the supremely human nature in Christ and in its appreciation of the vital importance and value of His kinship with us men and women it has done a service to the whole Church of Christ that cannot well be over-estimated.

CHAPTER VI

CONSTANTINOPLE—THE NEW ROME

Christian Foundation of Constantinople.—Of all the cities with which we have dealt, Constantinople alone enjoyed the privilege of having been born and educated in the Christian faith. As its name indicates, it was founded by Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor. It is unique among the cities of the Old World as having a Christian foundation.

It was built to be the new capital of the Roman Empire, as being more suitable for that purpose than Rome itself. The site was that of ancient Byzantium, on the Bosphorus, at the entrance to the Black Sea. The site was well chosen, commanding as it did the opposite shores of Europe and Asia, and communicating between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. As Gibbon puts it: "Its position appears to have been formed by nature for the centre and capital of a great monarchy." [1] The climate was all that could be desired, the soil productive, while the harbour was by nature one of

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xvii. I have followed Gibbon closely in the early part of this chapter.

the finest in the world, and was, moreover, ideally situated for purposes of trade, being accessible both to the merchant vessels of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and in touch by land as well as by sea with the riches of east and west, north and south. "Whatever rude commodities were collected in the forests of Germany and Scythia; whatsoever was manufactured by the skill of Europe and Asia; the corn of Egypt, and the gems and spices of the farthest Indies, were brought by the varying winds into the port of Constantinople." [1]

The site had the further advantage of being easily defensible, the approach on the land side being of small extent, and difficult to attack.

To the genius of Constantine in fixing his capital in this particular situation, in all likelihood, the Eastern Roman Empire owed its extraordinary vitality, which enabled it to survive so many unparalleled calamities, and outlive so many kingdoms. Constantine attributed his choice of this site to direct divine commands and instructions. But on the day of the dedication of the city, with his characteristic spirit of religious compromise, he intermingled heathen rites with the Christian ceremonies deemed suitable for such an occasion.

The story goes, and there seems no good reason to doubt it, that Constantine himself, holding a lance, walked at the head of a solemn procession to mark out the boundaries of the new city. When

[1] Gibbon, *ibid.* chap. xvii.

a courtier, probably tired of the long walk the Emperor was giving them, inquired whether he was not exceeding "the most ample measure of a great city," Constantine replied, with dignified mystery, "I shall still advance till He, the invisible Guide who marches before me, thinks proper to stop." [1]

The city was rapidly built, as the Emperor was eager and impatient—so rapidly, indeed, that not a little of it was "jerry-built," and some of the public buildings soon became unsafe. The Emperor spared no expense, and ransacked the cities of Europe for treasures of art with which to adorn his new capital.[2] He also gathered to him wealthy and skilful men from all parts of his Empire, so as to worthily populate the great city. Whatever could adorn the dignity of a great capital, or conduce to the welfare of its inhabitants, was in a short space contained within the walls of Constantinople. It soon became the chief city of the East, and in a generation or two nearly outrivalled Rome itself in wealth and population, though it never approached that venerable city in dignity and influence.

Apart from its actual buildings, Constantinople

[1] Gibbon, *ibid.* chap. xvii.

[2] A famous example of the Constantinopolitan habit of adding to the glories of the city at the expense of the rest of the world is to be found in the great church of St. Sophia (founded 532, dedicated 537), now the chief Mohammedan mosque. Six of its pillars are of green jasper from the temple of Diana at Ephesus and two of porphyry from the temple of the Sun at Rome.

was in all else a gorgeous imitation of Rome. Gibbon has likened it to a splendid theatre, filled with players of every character and degree, who repeated the language and imitated the passions of the original model.

The whole constitution of the city, its government, its honours, its customs, its arrangements, were on the Roman model, and all were conducted with punctilious ceremony and pompous grandeur.

When Constantine died his successors established their perpetual residence in the city he had built.

In A.D. 395 the Empire was finally divided, the two sons of Theodosius (the great orthodox Emperor) taking respectively the East and the West. Arcadius, the Emperor of the East, assumed, and his successors retained, the title of Emperor of the Romans. The Eastern Empire, with Constantinople as its capital, lasted till 1453, when it fell before the Turks.

During that time Constantinople was the headquarters of Eastern Christianity and orthodoxy, and was a real bulwark of Christianity against heathenism and Mohammedanism.

New versus *Old Rome.*—The Western Roman Empire, with its centre at Rome, became extinct A.D. *c.* 476, and Constantinople became nominally mistress of East and West, though not for long.

The real master of Rome, and of the West, had for some time been, not the Emperor, but the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, whose strength and importance

increased in proportion to the weakness of the Empire.

The new imperial city soon began to claim ecclesiastical pre-eminence corresponding to her political rank.

In A.D. 381 at the Council of Constantinople, the Bishop of Constantinople ranked next after the Bishop of Rome, while in A.D. 451 the Council of Chalcedon made the Bishop or Patriarch of Constantinople equal in rights and honours to the Bishop of Rome.[1] This was repeated at the Trullan Council in A.D. 692, when many Roman practices were at the same time condemned.

In spite of this Rome never even nominally submitted to the upstart episcopate of Constantinople, which in point of fact never really took anything but a second place in Christendom. There was constant jealousy and ill-feeling between the two, which increased as time went on till about the middle of the eighth century the two great Churches of East and West excommunicated each other. Constantinople taking the ground that the practices of the Roman Church gravely offended against orthodox Christianity.

The immediate point at issue was the question of the adoration of images. Rome declared in favour of it, Constantinople against it.

[1] In A.D. 588 the Bishop of Constantinople claimed the title of Universal Bishop. Against this the Bishop of Rome protested vehemently.

The practice of image-veneration had been gaining ground in the Church. Leo III of Constantinople, in order to stem this movement, which was becoming dangerously like idolatry, ordered images to be placed too high to be kissed, and in other ways tried to discourage it. Pope Gregory III of Rome, in A.D. 731, excommunicated all "enemies of images," which included the bulk of the Constantinopolitan Church and the Emperor Leo himself. Leo thereupon deprived the Pope of all his revenues from Southern Italy, severing Illyria from the Roman Papal Chair, and giving it to the Patriarch of Constantinople. His successor, Constantine V, in A.D. 754, held an Œcumenical Council, which excommunicated all who made images, declaring that the Lord's Supper was the only true image of Christ, and condemning every kind of veneration of images. This, of course, involved the Roman Church. The decrees of this Council were enforced in the East with savage violence and with not a little bloodshed.[1]

In 769 the Pope of Rome again anathematised "the enemies of images." About a century later, in 867, the Constantinopolitan Church charged the Roman Church with extreme heresies and serious departures from orthodox practice. The most important accusations were as follows:

[1] In spite of all this, the tendency in favour of image-worship was too strong, and in 869 it was sanctioned once more at Constantinople.

1. That the Roman Church had falsified the creed.[1]

2. That it did not acknowledge married priests.

3. That it enjoined fasting on Saturdays.

4. That it did not prohibit the clergy shaving the beard.[2]

5. That it pronounced anointing by presbyters to be invalid.[3]

From time to time there were attempts at reconciliation between the two Churches, but as a rule their relations were sadly strained generally on points of orthodox practice or of precedence. In 1277 there was a final breach, which has remained unhealed to this day.

In spite of its claims to distinction and supremacy Constantinople had very few distinguished Bishops, and at first hardly any orthodox ones.

For about forty years after the death of Constantine (337), who had managed to hold the balance between the opposing parties in the Church, who were divided on the question of the Godhead of Christ, and had done what he could to promote peace, Constantinople was the principal seat of

[1] This was because, at the Council of Toledo, the addition "from the Son" had been made to the article in the so-called Athanasian Creed, which before had run: "... the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father."

[2] The shaving of the beard was considered a foppish and effeminate fashion. A full beard is still worn in the Eastern Church.

[3] *I.e.* it practically made confirmation invalid except by a Bishop.

Arianism, which was greatly in favour with the court party during this period. The upholders of the Nicene doctrine were hardly treated and persecuted, and deprived so far as possible of the public exercise of their religion.

Constantinople was hardly built before it was given up to religious wrangles and controversies, in which the "argument of the club," as Addison calls it, was all too conspicuous. The chief interest of the citizens lay in doctrinal disputes. A contemporary writer describes it thus:

"Men of yesterday, mere mechanics, off-hand dogmatists in theology, servants, too, and slaves that have been flogged, runaways from servile work, are solemn with us and philosophical about things incomprehensible. With such the city is full—its smaller gates, forums, squares, thoroughfares; the clothes-vendors, the money-lenders, the victuallers. Ask about pence, and he will discuss the Generate and the Ingenerate; inquire the price of bread, he answers, 'Greater is the Father, and the Son is subject'; say that a bath would suit you, and he defines that the Son is out of nothing."[1]

In 379 Theodosius came to the throne, and the ascendency of the Arians came speedily to an end. It has been said that "among the benefactors of the Church, the fame of Constantine has been rivalled by the glory of Theodosius. If Constantine had the advantage of erecting the

[1] Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. de Deitate Filii.*

standard of the Cross, the emulation of his successor assumed the merit of subduing the Arian heresy, and of abolishing the worship of idols in the Roman world."

The story goes that Theodosius was confirmed in his opposition to Arianism by the following dramatic theological argument. He was seated on a throne with his eldest boy, on whom he had lately bestowed the name and honours of an Augustus. A Bishop approached and saluted his monarch with all becoming ceremony, and then turned to the royal child, whom he addressed familiarly as he would have done any ordinary child. The Emperor was enraged, and ordered the Bishop to be turned out for his insolence. As the guards laid hands on him to execute the order, the Bishop called out to the Emperor, "Such is the treatment which the King of Heaven has prepared for those impious men who affect to worship the Father, but refuse to acknowledge the equal majesty of the divine Son."

The Catholics of Constantinople welcomed their new sovereign gladly, for he had already declared against the Arians. "Let us believe," he had said, "the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We authorise the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians, and, as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the infamous title

of Heretics, and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of Churches. Besides the condemnation of Heaven, they must expect the severe penalties which our authority, guided by heavenly wisdom, shall think proper to inflict upon them."

Theodosius kept his word. He ordered Damophilus, the Arian Bishop of Constantinople, to subscribe to the Nicene Creed or leave the city. Damophilus at once chose the latter alternative, quoting the words, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." Before long all the Bishops and clergy in his dominions had a similar alternative put before them, and in a short time all the bishoprics and churches were in possession of the Catholics. This ecclesiastical revolution was brought to a successful issue fortunately (throughout the East) without tumult or bloodshed.

Constantinople produced no churchmen of real eminence in the Christian world; but there are three great names connected with the Church there, each of them closely associated with her earlier history: (1) Gregory of Nazianzen, (2) John Chrysostom, who was an alumnus of Antioch, and (3) Nestorius, who also came from Antioch.

Gregory of Nazianzen was one of the great Cappadocian trio, of whom the other two were Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, and Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, his brother. Gregory was the son of the Bishop of Nazianzen. He and Basil were close

friends, and were fellow-students at Athens along with Julian the Apostate, and there they distinguished themselves by their fine scholarship. When Basil was made Archbishop of Neo-Cæsarea he made his friend Gregory Bishop of an out-of-the-way little village called Sasima, really using his friend so as to assert his jurisdiction over a neighbouring Bishop. The place was utterly unsuited to a man of Gregory's sensitive nature and refined taste, and he hardly did more than visit it, and, as it turned out, the appointment ruined his career.

When Arianism was having it all its own way in Constantinople, and the upholders of the Nicene Creed were finding it hard to keep the orthodox faith from being altogether overwhelmed, they prevailed on Gregory to come to the rescue. There, in the hall of a private house, he commenced his labours. In spite of violent opposition and misrepresentation on the part of the Arians, his quiet eloquence and moral earnestness won him many adherents, and both his fame and his congregations grew and increased. By his efforts he was able to win many from error, and so to commend the Nicene Creed that a revulsion of feeling in its favour took place in many quarters. The Arians had no one of such persuasive power or such mental calibre in their ranks, nor, so far as we know, any one of such outstanding piety.

When the Emperor Theodosius came to Con-

stantinople and removed Damophilus the Arian from the archiepiscopal throne, he decided that Gregory should take his place. But Gregory himself confessed that, when the Emperor installed him (so great was the indignation and grief and rage of the Arians, who, though no longer in the ascendent, were still in the majority), he felt like a wolf coming into the fold rather than a pastor.

He was, however, never to have his appointment confirmed, and Constantinople never had the honour of numbering Gregory among her Bishops. In the following year, 381, an Œcumenical Council was held at Constantinople, the second of its kind in the history of the Church. One question which was then decided was that of the bishopric of Constantinople. Gregory was manifestly the best man for the post, both by reason of his previous choice by the Emperor and the orthodox people of Constantinople, and also because he was by far the greatest theologian and orator in the Eastern Church. But he seems to have provoked the majority of the Council by his indifference to a great quarrel which was going on between the supporters of two claimants for the bishopric of Antioch.[1] The objection was brought forward, based on an obsolete canon, that, as Gregory was Bishop of Sasima, he could not be translated to Constantinople. Tired of all the strife, Gregory offered to stand

[1] Gregory said that the quarrel would not have been worth continuing if it had been about two angels instead of two men.

aside, and give up the government of a Church which had been practically created by his labours. In his stead was elected a court official called Nectarius—an unbaptized layman. Nectarius was a kindly person, of good character, but quite unsuited for a foremost place in the affairs of Christendom. Gregory returned to Cappadocia, where he died some eight years afterwards.

At this Council of Constantinople, apart from the appointment of Bishops, the most important measures which were passed were as follows:

1. Arianism[1] was declared contrary to Roman law, and the Nicene Creed was reaffirmed. From that time it became the acknowledged creed of the Empire.

The so-called Constantinopolitan Creed, which is used with certain small alterations in the Church of England Communion Service, was almost certainly not formulated at this Council, though it may have been approved. It is almost identical with the Creed of Jerusalem, brought up to date at this time by Cyril, the Bishop of Jerusalem.

2. The Macedonians were condemned. The Macedonians were followers of Macedonius, deposed Bishop of Constantinople, who questioned the deity of the Holy Spirit, asserting that He was

[1] Arianism from then onwards was doomed in the Roman Empire itself, though it lingered on for a long while among the barbarians.

" a creature and a minister, and a servant of God." Another name for the Macedonians was Pneumatomachoi (fighters against the Spirit).

3. The teaching of Apollinaris was condemned. Apollinaris was a great anti-Arian, who, in his anxiety to safeguard the doctrine of the essential deity of Christ, apparently failed to realise and emphasise the fact that He was truly man.

John Chrysostom (the Golden-mouthed). When Nectarius died John Chrysostom was selected to succeed him by Arcadius, Theodosius's son and successor in the Empire. He was born at Antioch *c.* 347, and, like the Cappadocian trio, was educated at Athens, where he had a brilliant career. Later he became a pupil of Diodorus, of the school of Antioch, and ably carried on the traditions of that school of thought, though he was even greater as a preacher than as a theologian and scholar. He was at one time strongly attracted by monasticism, but restrained himself from abandoning home life out of his love for his mother. He, however, lived the life of an ascetic at home. Chrysostom very soon made his mark as a preacher at Antioch, where the people thronged to hear him, and he was instrumental in the conversion of a great number of the still heathen population there.

The most famous of his Antioch sermons were the so-called " Homilies on the Statues," delivered on the occasion of the punishment of that city after the great riots against Theodosius the Em-

peror,[1] during which the statues of the Emperor and his deceased wife were thrown down. In 398 Chrysostom was made Bishop of Constantinople. So great was his popularity at Antioch, however, that he had to be arrested outside the walls, and carried off post-haste.

During the Antioch period he composed many famous commentaries, on books both of the Old and New Testament.

From his elevation to the episcopate his whole life was an unsuccessful struggle against the sloth and vices of the clergy and the licentious practices of those in high places. "He was the idol of the people, but the scorpion of a luxurious Court." Eloquent and zealous, fearless in his attacks, he made many enemies, especially among the Bishops he deposed. Many of his homilies were directed against the fashionable women of his day. Eudoxia, the then Empress, was not spared. She became his implacable enemy, and to her he owed his downfall. One cannot be surprised at the irritation of this unscrupulous woman, for at one time he publicly denounced her as a Jezebel, and at another likened her to Herodias, who, as he put it, "was once more demanding the head of John on a charger."

In 403 Chrysostom had to go into exile, but was shortly recalled. His return to Constantinople is said to have resembled the triumphant progress

[1] *Cf.* Chapter on Antioch.

of a conqueror. But he was soon exiled again, this time to a squalid village in the wilds of Armenia. Here he devoted himself to missionary work, and to corresponding with Christians all over the world. The spite of the Empress did not, however, leave him even here, and he was again ordered to a more remote place of exile, to which he had to travel all the way on foot. He died on the journey, broken down by fatigue and hardship. He was the greatest, and perhaps the bravest and ablest, man who ever sat on the episcopal throne of Constantinople.

The third of the great Constantinopolitans whom we named was *Nestorius*. Like Chrysostom, Nestorius was renowned for his abilities, and even surpassed him in his efforts to drive away false doctrine. He, too, was brought from Antioch to the episcopal throne of Constantinople; he, too, was finally exiled.

Nestorius was an eloquent and pious man, but hasty and imprudent, with little knowledge of the world and human nature. What has made him famous, or rather notorious, was the heresy connected with his name. In his time there was a growing tendency towards the veneration of the Virgin Mary, as well as of virginity in general. Partly because of this, and partly because of zeal to establish the deity of Christ, many of the monks and clergy, especially those in sympathy with Alexandrian views, made frequent use of the

term "Theotokos," [1] as applied to the Virgin Mary.

Anastasius, Nestorius's private chaplain, preached against the practice, saying, "Let no man call Mary Theotokos, for Mary was but a woman, and it is impossible that God should be born of a woman."

A terrific controversy ensued, in which Nestorius took the part of his chaplain.[2] In defending him, Nestorius laid so much stress on the humanity of Jesus, as distinct from His divinity, that he seemed to make Him two persons. Nestorius was, in consequence, excommunicated, and deposed at the third Œcumenical Council of Ephesus (431). It may be remarked that Cyril of Alexandria, who was Nestorius's chief opponent and accuser, was also his judge as president of the Council.

A little later another Constantinopolitan, an old Archimandrite called Eutyches, went to the opposite extreme. "In insisting on the deity of Christ, he failed to recognise His true humanity. In fact,

[1] Mother of God.

[2] Nestorius objected to the phrase (1) because it was unscriptural. (2) Because it could be readily misunderstood and made to mean that what Mary brought forth was the eternal Logos Himself. He admitted the phrase when taken in the sense that Mary was the mother of the person who by His nature is the Son of God, inasmuch as the true and essential Son of God had appropriated to Himself the human nature of the Son of Mary and had taken it up into union with His own dignity. Nestorius, however, preferred the term Mother of Christ (Christotokos) as being less misleading. (3) Because the title, when misunderstood, seemed to him to be leading to worship of the Virgin Mary.

he deemed that our Lord had taken man's nature upon Him, and spoke of Him as having one divine nature." Dioscurus, Cyril of Alexandria's successor, defended this teaching; but it was condemned at the fourth Œcumenical Council held at Chalcedon (A.D. 451).

The characteristic features of Constantinopolitan Christianity may be summed up under these four heads—establishment, imitation, pretension, and orthodoxy.

I. *Establishment.*—The Christianity of Constantinople was distinct from that of most of the other early centres in that it was from the first of the "established" variety; that is to say, it was dependent in a peculiar way upon the views of the Emperor and Court. The Emperor was the real head of the Church there. Bishops were made or unmade at the pleasure of the Court. The Jus Circa Sacra gave the Emperor the right of legally determining all the relations between Church and State, and of guarding orthodoxy, etc.[1] To the Emperor belonged supreme direction of all religious matters. Almost from the first he directly influenced the choice of the Bishops. Later he arbitrarily appointed them himself. The Constantinopolitan Christians, and those who agreed with them, came to be known as Melchites, or "Emperorites," a nickname which was by no means intended to be complimentary, and which tells its own tale.

[1] Kurtz, *Church History*, vol. i. p. 243.

II. *Imitation.*—We have already noticed how the city tended to imitate and borrow rather than originate. In matters ecclesiastical it was much the same. It had no great school of thought, as at Antioch or Alexandria, while its best men were gathered in from elsewhere.

III. *Pretension.*—So again, in the ecclesiastical, as in the civil world, Constantinople was full of pretensions, laying claim to dignities and distinctions that it had never earned. It aspired to take the lead in the East without having won its way to the front and made a name for itself by its past services to Christendom. It wished to rival Rome as the leader of the Christian world without ever having won the confidence of the Churches by its statesmanship or administrative power.

IV. *Orthodoxy.*—Except for the first half-century of its existence, Constantinople stood for rigid, unbending orthodoxy. It originated no doctrine, but clung tenaciously to the old ones, distrusting everything new, whether in the way of development and progress, or otherwise. It outdid even Rome in conservatism, and alienated every Church which tried to think for itself or claimed anything like freedom. It put orthodoxy before Christianity, and the result was stagnation instead of life and inward growth. Its doctrines were unimpeachable, its Christian spirit was a caricature.

CHAPTER VII

EDESSA

All the Churches which we have already discussed have been in the Roman Empire, and, with the partial exception of Jerusalem, have been Greek-speaking, and practically European in outlook and interest. In Edessa, however, we are in touch with a form of Christianity which was at first for some time more or less independent of European influences. It may therefore be taken to represent "Christianity beyond the Eastern Roman Empire," the Christianity of a people with oriental sympathies, thinking oriental thoughts, and speaking an oriental language.

At the beginning of the Christian era Edessa was the capital of a little State called Osrhoene, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, in the north-west portion of Mesopotamia. The city itself is situated about 170 miles east of Antioch. Its native and ancient name was Urhai.[1] By some it has been identified with Ur of the Chaldees, though that

[1] Its Turkish name at the present day is Urfa, which is generally held to represent a reversion to the name Urhai, but may possibly be a corrupt and abbreviated form of Arphaxad *sic* R. Harris).

identification can now no longer be accepted. It is, however, quite near Harran, which is also associated with Abraham.

Of the *early history of Urhai* little is known. It was probably an important place in the early Babylonian age. Later, it seems to have come under Hittite influence; after that, again, it was engulfed in the great Aramean invasions from the south. From that period onwards its language was Aramaic. After the conquests of Alexander the Great it came to be part of the new Greek kingdom of Assyria, or "Syria," as it was erroneously called. In 305 B.C. Seleucus I (Nicator), King of Syria, renovated the city, giving it the Greek name of Edessa. At this time it came into contact with the culture and learning of the Greeks, but the interests of the people still continued to be Eastern rather than Western, and their language Aramaic, not Greek. In 132 B.C., when the kingdom of Syria had begun to break up, Edessa became capital of the little State of Osrhoene, which remained an independent kingdom for some three and a half centuries. During most of this period the Edessene Kings were between the two great contending Empires of Rome and Parthia. Although they inclined to the Parthian cause, the superior power of Rome exacted from them reluctant homage. In the troubles which followed the death of the Roman Emperor Commodus (A.D. 192) the Edessenes tried to shake off the

Roman yoke. They were, however, easily conquered by the Emperor Severus, and the last King of Edessa (Abgar IX) was sent in chains to Rome (A.D. 216). His dominions were reduced to a province, and his capital given the rank of a colony.

For the next three or four centuries Edessa was "in," but not "of," the Roman Empire; for the sympathies of its inhabitants were never with the Empire, but rather with the peoples to the east of them.

The inhabitants of Edessa were, as in nearly all the cities of the Near East, of a mixed race—Arabs, Arameans, Greeks, and Armenians, with apparently also a sprinkling of Jews. But the predominant element was Semitic, especially Aramean, or, as it is more commonly called, "Syrian." The polished citizens of Antioch looked down on the Edessenes, and called them "mixed barbarians." Their scorn, however, was ill-placed, for though Antioch was the centre of Greek culture and learning in Syria, it was Edessa and not Antioch which was the literary centre of the Aramaic-speaking world, and which produced no mean literature of its own.

The language spoken at Edessa was one of the several branches of the Aramaic language, another of which was the dialect used by our Lord when He was not speaking Greek.[1] Edessene

[1] The people of Palestine were bi-lingual. Edessene and Palestinian Aramaic were almost as closely akin as Danish and Norwegian.

Aramaic [1] was the purest and most elegant of these. It came to be the " medium of commerce throughout the Euphrates Valley," and in time also it became the " Christian " language of Asia, just as Latin became the " Christian " language of Western Europe.

The centuries (132 B.C. to A.D. 216) when Edessa was an independent kingdom were the golden age of Syriac literature. Unfortunately, the literary remains of that time are but scant. " But the ease and vigour of the earliest surviving literature of the Syriac-speaking Church, whether prose, poetry, or philosophic discussion, unmistakably reflect the glory of Edessa's three hundred years of honourable independence." [2]

Later Syriac literature, though much more abundant, was more influenced by Greek writers, and was more mediocre in quality.

There is an interesting legend regarding the *origin of the Christian Church in Edessa*, which probably arose through the desire of the Edessene Christians to prove the antiquity of their beloved Church. Eusebius, the historian, however, vouches for the authenticity of the story, saying that he obtained it from the public records of the city, and translated it from the Syriac language.

[1] This branch of Aramaic is usually termed Syriac, while Aramaic is incorrectly reserved for the others.

[2] Burkitt, *Early Christianity outside the Roman Empire*, p. 12.

Eusebius's version [1] is to the effect that Abgar,[2] the King of Edessa, having heard of the miracles of our Lord, wrote to Him, asking Him to come and heal him, for he was sick of an incurable disease. Our Lord replied, promising in due time to send one of His disciples to heal the King. Abgar's letter, and our Lord's answer to it, are worth quoting in full.

"Abgar, prince of Edessa, sends greeting to Jesus the excellent Saviour,[3] who has appeared in the borders of Jerusalem. I have heard the reports concerning thee and thy cures as performed by thee without medicines, and without the use of herbs. For, as it is said, thou causest the blind to see again, the lame to walk, and thou cleansest the lepers, and thou castest out unclean spirits and demons, and thou healest those that are tormented by long disease, and thou raisest the dead. And hearing all these things of thee, I concluded in my mind one of two things: either that thou art God, and, having descended from heaven, doest these things; or else, doing them, thou art the Son of God.[4] Therefore, now have I written and besought

[1] Eusebius, *H.E.* i. 13. The most important and fullest version of the legend is in the Syriac document, *The Doctrine of Addai*.

[2] Eusebius erroneously calls him Agbar; the other accounts have Abgar.

[3] According to another version, "the great doctor."

[4] According to the Armenian version of *The Doctrine of Addai*, "I understood and believed that thou art God, son of God, who hast descended from heaven and accomplished all these things."

thee to visit me and to heal the disease with which I am afflicted. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against thee and are plotting to injure thee. I have, however, a very small but noble State, which is sufficient for us both."

The answer, purporting to have been sent by Jesus, is as follows: "Blessed art thou, O Abgar, who without seeing hast believed in me. For it is written concerning me that they who have seen me will not believe, that they who have not seen may believe and live. But in regard to what thou hast written, that I should come to thee, it is necessary that I should fulfil all things here for which I have been sent. And after this fulfilment then to be received again by Him that sent me. And after I have been received up I will send to thee a certain one of my disciples that he may heal thy afflictions and give life to thee and to those who are with thee.

"And thy State shall be blessed and no enemy shall have dominion over it for ever."[1]

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension Judas, who is also called Thomas, by a divine impulse sent Addai,[2] one of the seventy, to Edessa as a missionary. It was told to Abgar that one who worked many wonders had arrived in his capital, whereupon the King sent for Addai and asked him

[1] These last words are omitted by Eusebius, but are found in the other versions.

[2] Eusebius calls him Thaddeus.

whether he were truly a disciple of Jesus the Son of God, who had promised to send one of His disciples to him. He further said to Addai that he so sincerely believed in Jesus as to have formed the resolution to lead his soldiers against the Hebrews, because they had crucified Him, and that he would have done so had he not been deterred from his purpose by regard for the Romans, with whom he had a treaty. Addai healed the King according to the promise, and was instrumental in converting both him and most of his people to Christianity.[1] Subsequently Addai, having organised the Church in Edessa, departed to preach the gospel in the East. His disciple Aggai he consecrated as Bishop in his place, while another disciple, Palut, was made a presbyter. When Abgar died his son who succeeded him turned against the Christians, and amongst the victims of his persecution was Aggai, who died before he could consecrate his successor, Palut. Palut, therefore, went to Antioch, where he was consecrated Bishop by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, who (so the narrative declares) had in his turn been consecrated by Zephyrinus the Bishop of Rome.

It is much to be regretted that so interesting and charming a story rests mainly on a document which is so full of discrepancies, not to speak of

[1] Eusebius's version of the story ceases in the middle of the account of the conversion of the city. The rest of the story is in *The Doctrine of Addai.*

improbabilities, as is *The Doctrine of Addai.* To mention but a few: Serapion became Bishop of Antioch before Zephyrinus of Rome was consecrated, so that he could not have been consecrated Bishop by Zephyrinus. Serapion was Bishop from A.D. 190 to 203, while Palut, whom he is expressly said to have consecrated, was, according to the narrative, also a contemporary of Addai's, a century and a half earlier! Furthermore, at the beginning of the story it is said that Hanan, Abgar's envoy, was sent to Eleutheropolis in Palestine, which city was not so called until A.D. 200.

Thomas, who is mentioned as sending Thaddeus, was the patron saint of Edessa. A Gnostic work of the third century, called *The Acts of Thomas*,[1] tells how Thomas went as missionary to India. The Malabar Christians there still count him as their first martyr, and evangelist of their country, and call themselves "Christians of St. Thomas." It is quite probable that these Christians were evangelised from Edessa in the name of their patron

[1] This is a singularly interesting work. It embodies a legend that Thomas was the Twin of Jesus (Thomas means Twin in Syriac)! Thomas and our Lord are represented as having been so like one another that they were constantly mistaken for one another!

Dr. Rendel Harris has suggested that there was a pre-Christian Twin (Thomas) Cult in Edessa, the Heavenly Twins being patron deities of Edessa, and that this, after the city was Christianised, led to Thomas being looked upon as the patron saint. This may help to explain the origin of this curious legend. There are to this day two remarkable pillars in Edessa which are almost certainly witnesses to this early Twin Cult.

saint. There is another account, perhaps earlier, which makes Parthia the scene of Thomas's efforts. This, again, may point to the missionary efforts from the same quarter.

These Thomas traditions may be taken as fairly good evidence of the early manifestations of the foreign-missionary spirit in the Edessene Church, which, as we shall see, was one of its finest characteristics.

The true history of when and how Christianity was introduced into Edessa is not known. It has been conjectured that the Addai of the legend was its first missionary. If Palut, who is there spoken of as a younger contemporary of Addai's, and also as contemporary with Serapion of Antioch (*c.* 200), was, as appears probable, an historical personage, then Addai's mission to Edessa cannot well be much earlier than about A.D. 150. Further back than that we have no means of going ; we can only say that it seems surprising that a city which was so important as Edessa, and was certainly in touch with Antioch, the great missionary centre of the early Christian world, should have been left unevangelised until so late a date. There must have been not a few Christians elsewhere in Mesopotamia before then.

The first Christian King of Edessa, of whom we are certain, was Abgar VIII [1] (176–213). In his

[1] Julius Africanus, the Christian historian, once visited his Court.

reign, in A.D. 201, there occurred a terrible flood, which partially destroyed the city. Amongst the public buildings officially recorded as having been destroyed on this occasion was the "temple of the Church of the Christians." This Abgar is interesting as being the first Christian monarch known to history.

Bardaisan.—Associated with him—indeed, the two were brought up together—is another notable person, Bardaisan (A.D. 154–222), the first Christian poet whose name has come down to us. Bardaisan is said to have written 150 hymns of no little beauty and charm.[1] His son Harmonius, who was a poet like his father, and a musician as well, set these hymns to music, and they were for long very popular in the Edessene Church. Christian poems and songs occupied a place of considerable importance in Syrian Church life, more so apparently than in the earlier Greek and Latin Churches. Bardaisan was a theologian as well as a poet. Eusebius says of him that he was "a man of very great abilities and a skilful disputant in the Syriac tongue. He composed dialogues against Marcion and certain others of his opinion. . . . These, besides many other works, were translated from Syriac into Greek by his friends" (*H.E.* iv. 30). Although he wrote against here-

[1] Professor Newbold contends that Bardaisan was the poet who wrote the *Odes of Solomon* (*Journ. of Bib. Lit.*, vol. xxx. pt. 2).

sies, he was accused of heresy himself as being a follower of Valentinus, the Gnostic. Eusebius tells us that this was the case at first, but afterwards he was converted to the orthodox faith without entirely " wiping away the filth of his old heresy." [1] In the latter part of his life Bardaisan went as a missionary to the mountaineers of Armenia.

Tatian.—Another famous Christian connected with the early Syrian Church was Tatian (*c.* 110—*c.* 180), the Apologist, the friend and disciple of Justin Martyr. Tatian was born in Assyria, but most of his life was spent " wandering over many lands," and his Christianity was in the main a product of Greek Christendom. His greatest work was an Apology addressed to the Greeks called *The Oration.* One thing especially noticeable in him is his devotion to the Christian Scriptures. It was the fascination of their " simplicity " which first attracted him to Christianity. Towards the close of his life he returned to the East and settled down, apparently in Edessa. His special contribution to Edessene Christianity was probably made at this time. This was the Syriac Harmony of the Four Gospels, known as the *Diatessaron.* Whether the *Diatessaron* was compiled from still older Syriac versions of the several

[1] Bardaisan, like not a few other oriental Christians, was interested in astrology, and was, perhaps, on that account, accused of fatalistic teaching. But, as a matter of fact, he held that, in respect to freedom, man stood at the head of all created things, not even excepting the stars.

Gospels, or was based directly on the Greek Gospels, and was itself the earliest form of the gospel narrative in the Syriac language, is not yet certain, though the evidence points in the direction of the former view. In any case, until well on into the fifth century the *Diatessaron* was in use in the Edessene and Mesopotamian Church, apparently for the most part to the exclusion of what they called there " separate " Gospels. So that, where the rest of Christendom had four Gospels, the Edessene Church had but a single Gospel, albeit a fourfold one.

As to the New Testament as a whole, for a long time the Edessenes had a smaller collection of books than that in vogue elsewhere, consisting as it did of the Gospel, the Acts, and the Epistles of St. Paul. These two facts alone serve to show the independence of the Church, and its isolation from the rest of Christendom.

What link Edessa had with the Christianity of the Mediterranean world was mainly through Antioch, which was also Syrian, though Greek-speaking. Although they did not acknowledge the ecclesiastical suzerainty of Antioch, the Edessene Bishops traced their " descent " from Serapion of Antioch. During the latter part of the fourth century, and the earlier part of the fifth, Edessa came into closer touch with Greek Christendom, and to some extent entered into its theological controversies. At this time the spell of the great

Christian scholars of Antioch fell upon Edessa. So much so that, when the Antiochian school came to an untimely end, crushed by the decrees of the Council of Ephesus (431), Edessa became its heir, and enthusiastically carried on its traditions.

Edessa, as we have already seen, was long the seat of Syriac literature and learning. Gibbon calls it the " Athens of Syria." In time it became the centre of Christian scholarship, too, in the Syriac-speaking Church. This Church, although it produced few first-class scholars, for many centuries laid great stress on Study in matters connected with Christianity, and had a real enthusiasm for Christian learning. In after-days a Mohammedan writer testified that, unlike the other Christian Churches, this one " instigated people to examine for themselves and to use the instruments of logic and analogy." There were famous theological schools at Edessa, where instruction was given in the faith, and where especially the study of the Scriptures was carried on.

The Edessene method of *Interpretation* closely resembled the Antiochian. There was a similar adherence to the historico-grammatical method, though in a somewhat modified form. It was, in fact, neither so learned nor so thorough as the Antiochian, while the temptation to allegorise was not always resisted. From the fifth century onwards Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentaries, which

were all translated into Syriac by Edessene scholars, became the basis of their biblical exegesis.

Edessene *Theology* before the fifth century, so far as it can be tested, did not keep pace with that of the rest of Christendom. It seems, until then, to have been developing quietly and slowly along its own lines, without the dread spectre of heterodoxy ever before its eyes; sometimes, it is true, allowing curious speculations, but being in no way bound by them. It was a Church which remained sufficiently primitive and unsophisticated not to have acquired a taste either for rigid ecclesiasticism, or binding orthodoxy, and which was more interested in religion than in anything else. Tatian and Bardaisan, although roundly charged with heresy by the rest of Christendom, were for long, both of them, *personæ gratæ* in the Mesopotamian Church, though, as it happened, their respective heterodoxies were in somewhat opposite directions; while it was actually not till A.D. 410 that the Nicene Creed (A.D. 325) was made binding on this Church, though a distinguished member of it, Jacob of Nisibis, is said to have been one of the foremost champions of orthodoxy at the famous Council of Nicæa.

Aphraates.—This primitive independence, and this lack of definite precision in theology, is best seen in the case of Aphraates, who was one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Syrian Church in the fourth century. Although he wrote while the

Arian controversy was at its height, Aphraates says absolutely nothing about it! And though he was really interested in the question of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, yet this is what he says in one place: "We are of Adam, and here with our senses we perceive little. Only this we know: that God is one and His Messiah one, and one the Spirit and one the Faith and one the Baptism. More than thus far it doth not help us to speak; and if we say more and if we investigate, we are helpless" (quoted by Prof. Burkitt). Aphraates was quite convinced of the divinity of Christ,[1] but he actually defends the Christian belief in this matter as being consistent with monotheism on the ground that "the name of divinity has been given to just men" by God! "David," he further points out, "also says of [men]: I have said, Ye are gods."[2]

Aphraates, like most of the Syrians (*e.g.* Bardaisan) laid great stress on the kinship of men with Jesus and on the high place assigned to man in the divine economy of the universe. While, as for man, Aphraates held that he "was formed by God in His own image, to be a temple for Him to dwell in, and therefore He gives to man honours which He denies to the sun and the moon and the host of

[1] "We truly hold," he says, "that Jesus our Lord is God, the Son of God."

[2] Our Lord Himself used a similar argument (John x. 33–6); but it would have been impossible for a Greek theologian to have done so during the Arian controversy, so strongly did it savour of Subordinationism.

heaven." It was a similar exaltation of "manhood," both in mankind and in the divine-human person of Jesus Christ, which helped at a later date to make the views of Theodore of Mopsuestia so acceptable among the Syrian Christians.

Professor Burkitt says of Aphraates—and it applies almost equally well to the pre-Nestorian Syrian Church generally: "On the one hand, he was wholly penetrated by the monotheism of the Catholic religion, and, on the other, his loyalty and devotion to his Lord assured him that no title nor homage was too exalted for Christians to give to Jesus Christ, through whom they had union with the Divine Nature." And further: "To Aphraates, Christianity was the revelation of a Divine Spirit dwelling in man, and fighting against moral evil, not first and foremost a tissue of philosophical speculation about the nature of the Divinity itself." [1]

Ephraim.—The only other Syrian Father of note in the fourth century was Ephraim Syrus (*c.* 308—*c.* 373), sometimes called the "Prophet of Syria." He was born of Christian parents in Nisibis

[1] There is an element in Aphraates' doctrine of the Trinity which, though very remote from Greek conceptions, is not surprising in a Semitic writer. It is indeed not confined to Aphraates. This is the suggestion that the Holy Spirit is a female element in the Godhead! The word for spirit in Syriac, being feminine, lends itself to this idea. In one place, *e.g.*, Aphraates says: "When a man hath not yet taken a wife, he loveth and honoureth God his Father and the *Holy Spirit, his Mother.*"

in Mesopotamia. "I was born," he says, "in the way of truth; but, though my boyhood understood not the greatness of the benefit, I knew it when the trial came." As a young man he worked under Jacob, the Bishop of Nisibis (*vide supra*, p. 145), and is said to have been a teacher in a school founded there by Jacob. Later on Ephraim came to Edessa, and is said by some to have been the founder of the theological school there. At any rate, he taught in Edessa for some time. Eventually he left the schools and became a kind of hermit, occasionally emerging from his retirement when, for one reason or another, his assistance was especially needed in Edessa. He gave up his time to study, and to the writing of books. These included commentaries on almost every book in the Bible, expository sermons, and a vast mass of metrical homilies and discourses on all kinds of theological subjects, besides other poems, sacred and secular.[1] He was a most voluminous writer, and generally very dull.

His hymns, although they were mostly theological doggerel, were very popular, and evidently suited his times. In some of them he attempted to counteract the influence of those written by Bardaisan, whom he accounted heretical. Many of Ephraim's hymns were adopted into the service of the Church, as also were prayers written by him.

[1] His *Carmina Nisibena* describes the struggles between the Romans and the Persians for the possession of Nisibis.

He was considerably influenced by Greek doctrine, and in consequence his doctrine was more after the Greek pattern than that of Aphraates. He was, moreover, infected with the prevailing Greek passion for orthodoxy. He was an able and sage commentator, and his work, like that of Theodore, has been much used by subsequent generations of commentators. It is worth noticing that both he and Aphraates commented on the *Diatessaron*.

The suppression of *Nestorianism* in the Empire marked a new era in the life of the Church of Edessa and of oriental Christianity in general. Rabbulas,[1] who was Bishop of Edessa at the time of the Council of Ephesus (431), turned against Nestorius, and supported Cyril of Alexandria in his campaign against him. In his zeal against doctrines like to those of Nestorius, he resorted to such extreme measures as burning the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and he expelled Ibas, the head of the theological school in Edessa, because he was an ardent follower of Theodore.

A few years later, however (435), Rabbulas died, and was succeeded by Ibas himself. Consequently a great stimulus was given to Nestorianism in Edessa, and the city became the chief resort for Nestorian refugees, and the principal seat of Nestorian scholarship and literary activity. In fact, as we have already suggested, the mantle of An-

[1] It was Rabbulas who finally suppressed the *Diatessaron*, and introduced instead the Peshitto N.T., or Syriac Vulgate.

tioch at this time fell upon Edessa, which carried on not only the theological and exegetical traditions of Antioch, but also revived its special missionary endeavours—so much so that the Nestorian Church, springing from Edessa, became the greatest missionary Church in the world.

The next half-century was a golden age for Syriac Christian literature and theology. In 489 the famous school of Edessa was closed by the Greek Emperor Zeno to the Nestorians, as declared heretics, so they founded other educational establishments of their own. The one at Nisibis in particular took the place of that at Edessa, and flourished better than ever. When the school of Edessa was suppressed great multitudes of Nestorian Christians left the city likewise, and spread over Mesopotamia, and farther east to Persia, and beyond, taking their religion with them. Forced to be exiles, they turned into missionaries. There was a great religious revival in the Persian Church, which itself was originally an offshoot from Edessene Christianity, and new Churches were planted everywhere.

In A.D. 498 the whole of the Mesopotamian and Persian Churches declared in favour of Nestorianism, and were definitely formed into a Church independent and distinct from the Churches of the West. They organised themselves under an Archbishop, to whom they gave the proud title of "Patriarch of the East," a title which became

increasingly appropriate as the Nestorian missionaries worked their way farther eastward. Although they were excommunicated by the orthodox Greek Church as Nestorians, and accepted the ecclesiastical independence which this gave to them, it was long before they would acknowledge the name Nestorian, inasmuch as they had never been followers of Nestorius, but rather of Theodore of Mopsuestia and his school. And they considered that Nestorius followed them, rather than they him.

In spite of occasional persecution, Nestorian schools and missionaries rapidly spread in Persia and India, and even far into China. The famous Nestorian tablet found at Singanfu, written in Chinese and Syriac, shows how Syriac-speaking missionaries were at work in China as far back as A.D. 636, and how, by that time, the Christianity introduced by them had made progress, and won recognition.

By the eleventh or twelfth century the Nestorian Church had become almost the largest Christian body in the world—the Christian Church of the Far East.[1] Certainly it was far greater in extent than the Latin or Greek Churches, while it far excelled both of these in educational zeal and missionary enthusiasm.

This great and living Church was not, however,

[1] The Patriarch at Bagdad was acknowledged by twenty-five "Metropolitans" (Archbishops).

destined to last very long, for about 1400, after previously undergoing bitter persecutions at the hands of the Arabs and Tartars, it was almost swept from the face of the earth by the great Tartar conqueror Tamerlane, who, in the course of his wars and conquests, spread death and unparalleled devastation over all the south-west of Asia. Only mere scattered fragments of the Church remained. At the present day there are a few handfuls of Nestorians to be found, mostly in Persia, still faithful to the theological tenet which cost them their union with the rest of Christendom.

CHAPTER VIII

CARTHAGE AND THE NORTH AFRICAN CHURCH

After Rome the most important centre of early Christianity in the Western portion of the Mediterranean world was Carthage, the ancient home, according to Virgil, of fair Queen Dido, and the scene of her tragic desertion by the faithless Æneas. As the chief city of North Africa, we will take it as representative of the great North African Church.

Carthage was situated on the sea-coast of North Africa, a little north of modern Tunis, about a hundred miles across the sea from Sicily. There is little or nothing left of the city now, as it was twice utterly destroyed. On the first occasion it was systematically razed to the ground by the Romans.[1] After it had again been overthrown, this time by the Arabs, the very stones with which it was built were scattered over Western Europe by merchants, who used it as a convenient quarry. Pisa cathedral,

[1] The stages in the break-up of Roman Carthage are as follows: The city was captured by Vandals under Genseric in A.D. 439. The Vandals were driven out by Byzantine armies in 533, and the city was restored and rebuilt. In 697 it was captured by the Arabs as the great Mohammedan movement swept westward. In 706 it was entirely destroyed, and from that time it has disappeared from history.

for example, is said to have been built from marble brought from the ruins of Carthage. Few great cities have been quite so effectually blotted out of existence.

In its early days Carthage was Rome's strongest rival, and was for long the greatest maritime power in the world. The city was founded somewhere about the ninth century B.C. by the Phœnicians, a race of born sailors and merchant mariners. The word Carthage is itself Phœnician in origin, and signifies "New Town." It was not the earliest Phœnician colony planted in the district[1]; hence, perhaps, its name, "*New* town," which for so many centuries was out of date; but it speedily outstripped the others, and eventually even the mother-city of Tyre too, in importance and influence. "Lying in the heart of the great North African roadstead, the Gulf of Tunis, at the very spot where that beautiful basin affords the best anchorage for vessels of large size, the place proved singularly favourable for agriculture and commerce, and for the exchange of their respective commodities."[2] The luxuriance of the country behind Carthage rivalled the valley of the Nile for richness, while it and Alexandria were the ports through which the trade of Africa found its way into Europe.

[1] It may have been a dependency of the adjoining city colony of Utica.

[2] Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, bk. iii. chap. i.

Of the features of the city itself comparatively little is known, though its public buildings and its palaces seem to have been unusually magnificent. The most prominent was the great walled citadel of Byrsus, or Bozrah,[1] on the summit of whose hill used to stand a temple approached by sixty steps. The landward side of the city was protected by a series of towers linked together by massive triple ramparts, which may still be traced. Of Christian remains, the most important are the ruins of a great basilica near the sea-shore, which is almost certainly one built as a memorial to Cyprian.[2] The harbour was artificial, and cunningly designed. It consisted of two basins, one for merchant ships and the other for war-vessels. The former "opened into the lagoon of Tunis, and ended in a narrow passage capable of being closed by a chain."

The Carthaginians were an industrious and eminently practical people, with a genius for business organisation. Their interests did not lie in warfare or aggrandising conquest, but in the peaceful victories of commerce. First and foremost, theirs was a city of merchants, a city whose sole and absorbing interest was trade.

Not only was Carthage inclined to utilitarianism, but it further showed a marked tendency towards an exclusive and monopolist spirit. The policy

[1] Bozrah is a Semitic word meaning fortress. *Cf.* Bozrah, the capital of Edom.

[2] *Vide sub*, p. 168.

of Rome used to be the extension of her political privileges to her allies, and in a lesser degree even to the races subject to her. But Carthage, in the days of her independence, excluded all from equality of privilege with herself. She did not share her benefits with her dependents and friends, but monopolised them for herself, so that, with all her world-wide trade interests, she was self-centred and narrow. The State, for her, was a "close corporation." This spirit of monopoly and exclusiveness never quite left her, and showed itself from time to time in the Carthaginian conception of Christianity and of the Church.

Ancient Carthage lasted from about the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the second century B.C. During the last century of her existence (265–146 B.C.), there took place the series of terrific struggles with her rival Rome, which are known as the Punic Wars. At one time it seemed as if Rome were bound to give way, and as if Carthage were to be the mistress of the West; but finally, in spite of the brilliant victories of Hannibal, the great Phœnician city was crushed and destroyed (146 B.C.). Cato's famous advice to the Roman Senate, "Delenda est Carthago," [1] was so literally followed that "where the industrious Phœnicians had bustled and trafficked for five hundred years, Roman slaves henceforth pastured the herds of their distant masters."

[1] "Carthage must be blotted out."

This, however, was not destined to be the last of Carthage, for Julius Cæsar (29 B.C.), unwilling to waste so magnificent a site for a city, had a new Carthage built where the old one had stood.[1] It was not long before the Roman Carthage regained much of its former prosperity, though never again did it seriously threaten the supremacy of Rome in the West. Gibbon speaks of it thus:

"A new city had arisen from its ruins, with the title of a colony: and though Carthage might yield to the royal prerogative of Constantinople, and perhaps to the trade of Alexandria, or the splendour of Antioch, she still retained the second rank in the West. That wealthy and opulent metropolis displayed in a dependent condition the image of a flourishing republic. Carthage contained the manufactures, the arms, and the treasures of the six provinces. . . . Her 'supreme magistrate' had the state and dignity of a consul of ancient Rome. Schools and gymnasia were instituted for the education of the African youth. The buildings of Carthage were uniform and magnificent: a shady grove was planted in the midst of the capital; the *new* port, a secure and capacious harbour, was subservient to the commercial industry of citizens and strangers. . . . The reputation of the Carthaginians was not equal to that of their country, and the reproach of Punic

[1] An earlier Roman attempt to revive Carthage was made in 122 B.C., but it was to all intents and purposes a failure.

faith still adhered to their subtle and faithless character. The habits of trade and the abuse of luxury had corrupted their manners." [1]

The population of Carthage, and also of the Roman pro-consular provinces of Africa generally, as we find it in Christian times, was made up chiefly of three races—its latest conquerors, the Romans, its former conquerors, or rather settlers, the Phœnicians, and the original natives, the Berbers,[2] a pure African, though not a negro race, who are to be found there even at the present day, still conquered but never exterminated.[3]

"These Berber aborigines look like Europeans, and are utterly unlike the Semite or the negro, or even the Egyptian. Their tall and sinewy forms, often with blue eyes and flaxen hair, have given rise to many a legend of children of the Vandals . . . but their vivid and emotional temper reminds us rather of Gauls or Phrygians than of the stolid Teutons." [4]

As regards the Roman element, Carthage had of course been remade as a Roman colony, and had become almost as Roman as Antioch was Greek. Latin had become the recognised language, while the law and constitution were also

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxxiii.

[2] The Greeks and Romans called them Nomades, or Numidians (*i.e.* the pastoral people).

[3] Archbishop Benson said of them, "The Berber saw all other races in, and he will see them out."

[4] Gwatkin, *Early Ch. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 232.

for the most part on the Roman model. In some degree Carthage was more Roman and more distinctively Western than Rome itself, for it was far less influenced by the tide of Greek thought and culture which flowed into the West in the centuries following the break-up of the great Greek kingdoms. It was the one great city of the Roman Empire practically untouched by the Hellenistic spirit.

As to the Phœnicians, in spite of the predominance of the Roman element, the people still clung to many of their old Phœnician traditions. Even the language was not altogether displaced by Latin. In Tertullian's time (A.D. *c.* 200), the then Emperor, Severus, who was a native of North Africa, spoke Phœnician as his native tongue, and as late as A.D. 400 many of the peasants clung to the old language. Not a few of the early martyrs bear native names, *e.g.* Nartzalus. And even the Carthaginians who spoke nothing but Latin and bore Roman names, as often as not, were of Phœnician descent.

The combination of these three elements produced a distinctive type of character more fiery and uncompromising than that of the well-balanced Roman, more emotional and intense than that of the intellectual Greek, while at the same time there was evident in it the legal spirit of the Roman, the commercial and monopolist spirit of the Phœnician, and also a certain crudity and simplicity which may perhaps be traced to the Berber.

Most of these traits show themselves in the lives and writings of the great Carthaginian fathers, and in the history of the North African Church, and probably helped to make that history what it was.

The original religion of the Carthaginians was that which the Phœnicians brought from Canaan, their chief gods being Moloch (or Baal-Ammon), Tanith (or Astarte), Ashmun and Melkarth, the Baal whose worship Jezebel tried to force upon Israel in Elijah's time. All of these were forms of nature-religion, and were sensual and cruel, especially the worship of Moloch. Some of the most objectionable practices of these worships had not ceased even in Christian times. Tertullian, *e.g.*, states that, up to his time, children were sacrificed to Moloch, though not publicly.[1]

After Carthage was Romanised, the Phœnician deities were renamed, or at least identified with Roman gods—Moloch with Saturn, Astarte with Juno Cœlesta, Ashmun with Æsculapius, while the rest of the Roman Pantheon was introduced. When Christianity came on the scene the place was pagan to the core. Its heathenism had nothing to recommend it, nothing to modify it, nothing to palliate it. It was utterly corrupt, and its appeal was to the lowest passions in man's nature.

Consequently, the Christianity of Carthage is frequently marked by a stern antagonism to all

[1] Tert. *Apol.* 9.

indulgence of the flesh, and even at times to lawful pleasure, and there is a shrinking from everything even remotely connected with heathenism and idolatry. There was little temptation to look upon Paganism as in any way a preparation for the gospel. It was rather something to be avoided at all costs, and if possible utterly abolished in the name of Christ.

Christianity in Carthage.—The first beginnings of Christianity in Carthage are not known. Unlike most of the other cities which have been studied, the Church there had neither tradition nor legend of an apostolic foundation. But Christianity must have been preached there at an early date, for towards the end of the second century we find that the Christian community there was both flourishing and prominent, and apparently long established. By this time, too, there was in use there a Latin version of the Scriptures, the earliest known, which most textual critics believe to have had its origin in North Africa, and in all probability in Carthage itself. The date generally assigned to the making of this version is some time not later than the middle of the second century, and may well have been earlier. How long the North African Church had been in existence before the version is unknown; it can hardly have been much less than a generation, and very likely longer. It is not improbable that Christianity first came to Carthage by way of Rome, but nothing

is known for certain, and the Christian community there does not appear on the page of history until the year A.D. 180, when it is ushered in by a band of martyrs [1]—a fitting entry into history for a Church which was above all others a martyr Church. Perhaps no Church in the early centuries of Christianity had its annals so red with the blood of men and women who poured out their lives gladly for Christ's sake. And no Church displayed more splendid heroism and intense devotion, or prized so highly the privilege of the martyr's crown.

On the other hand, perhaps no Church of the time has such a record of fanaticism and sectarian bitterness. Its history is one of persecutions and schisms, schisms and persecutions. "Deeply impressive indeed is the history of these African Christians, great alike in their virtues and in their faults." [2]

And even this unlovely side of the character of the Carthaginian Christians, their fanatical bitterness, their narrowness and intolerance, was but the distorted manifestation of the noble virtues of unswerving loyalty to the faith and fervent zeal for the purity of the Church. No Church suffered less from indifference, no Church more from excess of zeal or from ill-regulated enthusiasm.

Connected with Carthage are three outstanding personalities, each of whom made a lasting im-

[1] See page 165. [2] Foakes Jackson, *Hist. of Chr. Ch.* p. 260.

pression on the life of the whole of Western Christendom, both in their own and in subsequent times. They are so closely connected with the life of the Carthaginian Church that some account of them will serve to illustrate the outstanding features of its history and characteristics. These three are Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine.

First comes *Tertullian*, the great apologist and defender of the faith against heretics and heathen. Little is known of his early life. He was born in Carthage of heathen parents (probably about A.D. 150), and was educated as a "barrister," probably with a view to public life. The effect of this training is seen in all his writings, where the legal trend of mind and the tendency to special pleading constantly appears. Had he continued in his profession it is quite clear, from the unusual ability displayed in his works, that he would have had a brilliant career. Although he does not say so in so many words, it seems that he was won to Christianity by the impression made upon him by the quiet readiness of the martyrs to suffer for their faith. "Every man," he says, "who witnesses the noble patience of the martyrs is struck with misgivings and is set on fire to examine into the matter in question: and, as soon as he has come to know the truth, he straightway becomes a disciple also." [1] This sounds like autobiography, but slightly disguised. One of his

[1] *Ad Scapulam*, § 5.

greatest and most famous sayings tells the same tale: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Tertullian's conversion took place A.D. *c.* 192,[1] and not very long afterwards he was made a presbyter of the Church. Later on in his life (*c.* 199), attracted by the stern rigour and puritanism of the Montanists,[2] he joined their sect, and employed his literary gifts on their behalf. Whether he ever rejoined the Catholic Church is doubtful, as also is the manner of his death.[3] Owing to his connection with the Montanists, Tertullian has never been recognised as a "saint," although the Christian Church in all its history has had few abler or braver champions than he. All Tertullian's writings are marked by extraordinary ability. Although his Latin lacks smoothness and elegance, his language is astonishingly forcible and direct. In particular he betrays a perfect genius for epigram. Many of his clear-cut, vivid phrases have become the current coin of the Christian Church. "Everywhere he is the keen lawyer who uses every argument that will tell, and appeals to every passion that will serve his purpose. Irony and sarcasm and paradox and downright special pleadings alternate with grand bursts of eloquence and long stretches of solid reasoning. His stern, uncom-

[1] Gwatkin puts it A.D. *c.* 195.

[2] See page 198.

[3] Jerome states that he lived on into old age, others say that he was martyred.

promising sentences come like blows of a hammer, crushing everything before them." [1]

Tertullian's works may be divided into three groups: (1) Writings in defence of Christianity against non-Christians, Jews, and heathen. (2) Controversial writings against heretics in defence of the doctrine and practice of the Church. (3) Practical treatises dealing with moral questions and asceticism. He was first and greatest of the Latin apologists, the most distinguished of whom, as it happened, all belonged to the North African Church.[2] The only other apologist of repute in the Early Western Church was Irenæus; but he, though a Bishop in Gaul, was a Greek writer.

The age of Tertullian was an age of martyrdoms, when the existence of the Church had become a challenge to heathenism, and Christianity had to make good its right to live. Until his time, the Church in Africa seems to have had comparative immunity from persecution such as had befallen it in other parts of the world. But shortly before his conversion the storm broke. The earliest record we have of the North African Church is the semi-official account which came to light a few years ago of the trial of a number of Christians,

[1] Gwatkin, *Early Ch. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 228.

[2] The most important of these Latin apologists in North Africa were Minucius Felix, a contemporary of Tertullian's; Arnobius and his pupil Lactantius, who belong to the time of the Diocletian Persecution, about a century later; and Augustine, about a century later still. Cyprian also might be included among the apologists.

and of their summary condemnation to death for their faith [1] (A.D. 180). Tertullian himself, at a somewhat later date, is believed to have edited the *Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, the horrible and yet sublime story of yet another batch of martyrs, told partly in Perpetua's own words. Some of Tertullian's works deal specifically with the problems and duties of a martyr Church.[2] In these he wrote as one who any day might have to face death, to those who were in like case ; and there is in his writings the tense emotion belonging to such a situation. As one who has counted the cost for himself, he counsels faithfulness unto death. His apologetic writings have the same background. The greatest of these was his *Apology for Christians* addressed to the governors of provinces. It is a defence of Christianity from the accusations levelled against it, and is in part a counter-charge against heathenism, in which every weapon, from blunt truth to keen and cutting sarcasm, is used with deadly effect.

Tertullian's writings against heretics, especially the one on the *Prescription of Heretics*, display his extraordinary cleverness, and at the same time his intolerance and his tendency to gross unfairness in argument. The *de Præscriptionibus* is indeed a "most plausible and mischievous book." The line of argument in it depends on a quibble based

[1] *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs.*
[2] *Ad Martyres, De Fuga,* etc.

on a legal analogy in Roman law, by which Tertullian's opponents, heretics in general, are, as it were, put out of court. "You try to argue with heretics, and to convince them, and you do no good: the only way to overcome them is to shut them up sharply with what the Roman law calls Prescription, and tell them *our* belief is the belief of the Churches which trace back their origin to the Apostles, and therefore it *must* be the true belief." [1]

"Apart from the infectiousness of his intolerance, Tertullian did serious injury to the Church of his own age, and of later ages, by beginning the process of casting the language of theology in the moulds supplied by the law-courts." [2] His "reckless use of legal phraseology" led the way to those legal conceptions of spiritual things which characterised the theological and ecclesiastical doctrines of the West.

To understand [3] Tertullian, we have to remember that he was not only a practical Roman lawyer, but a Carthaginian, hot-blooded, high-spirited, emotional and fiery, a man of intense antipathies and fervid loyalties. The Romans were always judicial, but the Carthaginians found it strangely

[1] *Cf.* the application of this to the Interpretation of Scripture, p. 184.

[2] Hort's *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 105.

[3] The only English writer who has ever done justice to Tertullian, and written of him with sympathetic insight and understanding, is Dr. T. R. Glover in his *Conflict of Religions*, chap. x.

hard to see two sides to a question, and so were nearly always partisan, and often fanatical. The judicial temper seemed to Tertullian strangely like compromise; and the key-note of all his writings, as also of the African Church, was always "no compromise." Compromise always seemed to him to savour of disloyalty and of giving place to the enemy. He would have no compromise with heathenism or heresy, and in the Church no dallying with the world, the flesh, and the devil. His spirit of passionate devotion, of utter loyalty and self-sacrifice, compels our reverence and admiration, even when we deplore his harshness and severity and his frequent uncharitableness. Of all the Carthaginian Fathers he is most typical of the North African Christians, with their fervid but ill-regulated zeal for the purity of the Church, and their readiness to lay down their lives for their Master.

Cyprian.—Like Tertullian, Cyprian was born of heathen parents, and not converted to Christianity until middle life. Like him, too, he was trained as a lawyer and rhetorician, and won for himself a reputation for eloquence. He came of a well-to-do family of high rank, and was himself a man of considerable wealth and influence. Unlike Tertullian, he was noted for his courtesy and urbanity of temper. "His systematic habits and powers of business contributed greatly to his success as the first of church organisers. His address was dignified, conciliatory, affectionate; his looks

attractive by their grave joyousness." [1] Even in heathen society he was treated with deference and respect, and never lost his popularity.

He was converted about A.D. 246. Not long after his conversion he sold most of his estates and distributed the proceeds to the poor. He threw himself at once into the study of the Scriptures, and especially of the writings of Tertullian, whose thoughts he reproduced in his own works. It is said that almost every day he would ask his secretary for some writing of Tertullian, saying "Da magistrum!" (Give me the master). "In originality, profundity, force and fulness of thought, as well as in speculative and dialectic gifts, he stands indeed far below Tertullian, but in lucidity and easy flow of language he far surpasses him." [2]

When Cyprian was still a novice, the Bishop of Carthage died. By general consent Cyprian, in spite of his own unwillingness, was elected to fill the place (A.D. *c.* 248). Such a step was exceptional, but it was felt that Cyprian's tactful wisdom and executive ability were exceptional too. He made a splendid Bishop, and it is in his work as an administrator and organiser of the Church that his greatness chiefly consists. Gwatkin says of him: "His nearest modern likeness is in some of our great English churchmen. They are born rulers; men of intense activity, yet of grave and winning

[1] E. W. Benson, *Murray's Dict. of Chr. Biog.*
[2] Kurtz, *Ch. Hist.* § 31.

gentleness; men of princely dignity and perfect temper; as quick as any lawyer to judge of men, and as skilful organisers as any merchant princes." [1]

The work laid upon Cyprian was no sinecure. There had been no persecution in the Church for about thirty years, many of the Christians had become worldly and lax, and abuses had sprung up even amongst the clergy. Cyprian at once began to purge the life of the Church, acting with moderation but with determination. In less than a couple of years his reforms were interrupted by the Decian Persecution (A.D. 250), the most determined and most systematic attack upon Christianity which had yet been made. The persecution was directed against all Christians, but the Bishops were specially aimed at, the object being to disorganise and overthrow the Church by destroying its leaders. Cyprian, therefore, withdrew into hiding, which brought on him the accusation of cowardice. During his absence from Carthage he guided the affairs of the Church by his epistles.[2]

The persecution, though sharp and far-reaching, was short, and lasted but for a year; it was a great testing time for the Church, which as a whole came out of it splendidly, but with a difficult problem on its hands—how to treat the "lapsed," viz. those who had given way to terrors, and

[1] Gwatkin, *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 281.

[2] There are eighty-two of Cyprian's epistles still in existence; thirty-eight of these belong to this period of his life.

either joined in some way in heathen worship or procured false certificates (*libelli*) that they had done so. In dealing with the situation which had thus come about, two parties arose in the Church, one led by Novatus of Carthage, a presbyter jealous of Cyprian, advocating extreme lenience towards the apostates; the other led by Novatian of Rome, advocating unswerving and indiscriminating severity. It fell to Cyprian to steer the Church through these difficulties. When the persecution was over he called a council of Bishops to decide this among other questions. Owing to his recommendation, a middle course was taken, severe but discriminating, which alienated both the extreme parties, but in which Cyprian was supported by the laity and Bishops both of Italy and Africa. When still further persecution seemed imminent, a new council under Cyprian's guidance offered pardon to all who had continued steadfast in their penance, "that they might be armed for the impending conflict." This finally alienated the party of extreme rigour, who held that "the Church on earth was pure, and could not be defiled by apostates," and a serious schism in the Church was the result.[1]

With regard to these "Novatianist" schismatics, as they were called, the question soon came up as to whether those who received the Novatianist baptism and afterwards joined the "Catholic"

[1] This is known as the Novatian Schism.

Church needed to be rebaptized or not.[1] Cyprian, who held rigid views as to the unity of the Church, supported the stricter theory, and induced a council of North African Bishops to support it likewise. This they did, it may be mentioned, in spite of the Bishop of Rome's threat to break off communion with any Church which should advocate rebaptism. Cyprian's episcopate soon came to a tragic close. Persecution broke out afresh under Valerian in 257; Cyprian was banished, but in the following year was recalled, condemned, and beheaded, to the great grief of his people and to the regret even of the heathen authorities. "Cyprian's epoch-making significance lies not so much in his theological productions as in his energetic and successful struggle for the unity of the Church as represented by the monarchical character of the episcopate."[2] He is the first great ecclesiastic of Christendom, and the first to formulate a comprehensive and definite theory of church government. With him, the primitive and somewhat haphazard constitution of the Church definitely becomes a sacerdotal hierarchy. There may have been tendencies in this direction before Cyprian, but he it was who emphasised them and gave them permanent recognition.

Augustine.—Last, and perhaps greatest, of these famous Carthaginians comes Augustine, best known

[1] The Novatianists rebaptized converts from the Church.
[2] Kurtz, *Ch. Hist.* § 31.

and best beloved of all the Fathers, in spite of his stern and rigid theology. Augustine was born in A.D. 354 at Thagaste in Numidia. His father was a pagan, but his mother, Monica, was a devoted Christian, to whom her son owed much of what he afterwards became. He received an excellent education, and became a student of rhetoric at Carthage, where he distinguished himself at the schools. His youth was not saintly. Like most other young men of his time, he gave rein to his passions, and indulged in worldly and sensual pleasures. Yet even in the midst of them he had aspirations after higher things. "Make me chaste, but not yet," was the burden of his prayers at this period of his life. These longings for better things were in part due to his study of Cicero's *Hortensius*, which made a deep impression on him. About this time he joined the Manicheans, a sect whose tenets were a queer mixture of Theosophy, Rationalism, and Dualism.[1] But, after being an ardent Manichean for nearly ten years, he came to realise, to his great disgust and disappointment, that the whole system was a medley of ill-based inconsistencies, utterly unsatisfying to the intellect, and much more so to the heart. For a time he sank into utter scepticism. About 383 he went to Rome, and was subsequently appointed a professor of rhetoric at Milan. Here he studied Neo-Platonism and the Epistles of St.

[1] The strife of good and evil in his own soul inclined him to a theory of dualism.

Paul, and further came into contact with Ambrose, the great Bishop of Milan. As a result, light broke in upon his soul and scattered the fogs of Materialism and Pantheism in which he had lost himself. His intellectual standpoint was now Christian, and that of the Christian Church; but what he needed was something more than the acceptance of doctrine, more even than illumination. "I awoke in Thee," he says, "and found Thee infinite, and this vision came not from the flesh. . . . I marvelled to find that I loved Thee, and not a phantom instead of Thee. I could not remain at rest to enjoy my God, but I was wafted up to Thee by Thy beauty, and immediately torn away from Thee by my own weight . . . and the weight which bore me down was carnal habit."[1] The recollection of this time of struggle coloured all Augustine's subsequent thinking with regard to sin, free-will, and grace. He continued to search the Scriptures. The final step soon came. One day, after an earnest talk with his friend Alypius, he went to the garden, and there, while agonising in prayer, he heard repeatedly the words, "Take read, take read." He opened his copy of St. Paul, and his eye fell on Rom. xiii. 13, 14. The words seemed written as if for himself alone, and he took them as a divine message directed to him. He thereupon surrendered himself to God once and for all, and peace came into his heart. After a time of preparation

[1] *Confessions*, vii. 17.

he was baptized by Ambrose, A.D. 387, along with his friend Alypius and his illegitimate son Adeodatus.[1]

Shortly after this he gave up his career, and returned to Africa, and entered on a life of prayer and study. From this life of quiet devotion he was called to become first presbyter (A.D. 391), and then Bishop (A.D. 395), of Hippo Regius, a city of considerable importance to the west of Carthage. From this time he came to the front as the leader of Christianity, not only in his own diocese, nor in the North African Church alone, but in the whole of Western Christendom. As a theologian and ecclesiastic, as a teacher and preacher, his fame and influence extended far and wide, partly through his actual personality, partly through his writings. He died at the age of seventy-six in A.D. 430, during the invasion of the Vandals, while they were actually besieging Hippo.

Augustine's life was one of incessant activity. Besides his pastoral duties, he wrote some 230 books, a considerable number of which have come down to us. These are mainly Philosophic, Dogmatic, Exegetic, Apologetic,[2] and Controversial. Like

[1] The account of his life up to this time, and especially of his spiritual struggles, we have from his own pen, in his *Confessions*, one of the greatest religious classics of the world. In Christian literature, it probably ranks next after the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*. The *Confessions* are cast into the form of a monologue addressed to the Almighty. The whole work is an illustration and expansion of the opening words: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee."

[2] The most important of these was his *City of God*, in twenty-two books, the best known of Augustine's work after the *Confessions*.

all the Africans, he is weakest as an interpreter of the Scriptures. His genius was best displayed in his theological works. His dialectic skill, his philosophic culture, his profundity of thought, and, above all, that experience of God which came to him along the line of his long intellectual and moral struggle, and led him deeper and higher than pure reason can take any man—all these combined to make him, in spite of many inconsistencies and many grave faults and shortcomings, the greatest theologian of early Christian times. He, more than any other, determined the trend of subsequent theology in the West, and it is a curious fact that it is he above all others whom both Protestants and Roman Catholics have delighted to honour, and to whose authority they appeal with equal confidence. In commenting on this fact, Professor Gibb well remarks: "The inconsistencies, real and apparent, in Augustine's thought account in some measure for the homage rendered to him by theologians of opposite schools. But it was also due in greater measure to the reconciling power of his fervid piety and his insight into the very heart of religious questions—an insight which often enabled him to soar into regions in which the antinomies of logical thought are harmonised." [1]

[1] "*Confessions of Augustine*," by Gibb and Montgomery, Intro. p. viii.

CHAPTER IX

CARTHAGE (*continued*)

Attitude towards Heathenism.—The attitude of Carthage and the West towards Greek philosophy and the non-Christian religions was a complete contrast to that of Alexandria and the Eastern Churches generally.

The great Alexandrians sought, as we have seen, to reconcile Christianity and the teaching of the Scriptures with the truths of Greek philosophy, and recognised the latter as a real, even if imperfect, preparation for Christianity. Nearly all the African writers, on the other hand, endeavoured to discredit philosophy, and to point out its shortcomings and errors. Even Augustine, although he had learned much from the philosophers in his early and unregenerate days, especially from Plotinus, the great Neo-Platonist of Alexandria, and was no mean philosopher himself, yet distrusted heathen philosophy profoundly and minimised its value.

The others, when they took notice of it at all, were frankly hostile, and looked on it as of a piece with the rest of heathenism, almost wholly bad,

and emanating from the devil rather than from God. Even the greatest and best of the philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, were treated with scant courtesy,[1] and the admission that there could have been any good in them or their teaching was made grudgingly. Philosophy was looked upon as a rival of Christianity, and was therefore made an object of attack. Everything non-Christian was held to be anti-Christian, and therefore undeserving of sympathetic, and, one must add, even fair treatment. "He that is not with us is against us," was a sentiment which had the harshest construction put upon it, and was acted upon with great fervour. In this, as in other directions, partisanship was mistaken for loyalty, and refusal to recognise and acknowledge truth elsewhere than in Christianity was taken to be faithfulness to truth.

A few quotations chosen almost at random will illustrate this very marked characteristic of the African Church. Lactantius, in his Introduction to the third book of the *Divine Institutes*, says: "It is the business of the book to show the emptiness and falsehood of philosophy"[2]; and again, "All the wisdom of man consists in this alone, the knowledge and worship of God. . . . Therefore, with all the power of my voice I testify, I proclaim, I declare: Here, here is that which all philosophers have sought throughout their whole life:

[1] *Cf.* Tert. *de Anima*, chap. i. [2] Bk. iii. § 2.

and yet they have not been able to attain to it. . . . Let them, therefore, all depart, inasmuch as they do not instruct human life, but throw it into confusion." [1]

Tertullian held that "the truth has been well-nigh excluded by the philosophers through the poisons with which they have infected it." [2] And later on in the same book he remarks, with biting sarcasm, "The fault, I suppose, of the divine doctrine lies in its springing from Judea rather than from Greece. Christ made a mistake, too, in sending fishermen to preach rather than the sophist"; and he goes on further to say, "Whatever noxious vapours accordingly exhaled from philosophy obscure the clear and wholesome atmosphere of truth, it will be for Christians to clear away, both by shattering to pieces the arguments which are drawn from the principles of things—I mean those of the philosophers—and by opposing to them . . . in order that both the pitfalls wherewith philosophy captivates the heathen may be removed, and the means employed by heresy to shake the faith of Christians may be destroyed." [3]

As for attempting to harmonise the truths of Christianity and philosophy, he bluntly asks, "What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? . . . Away with all attempts to

[1] *Ibid.* bk. iii. § 30. [2] Tert. *de Anima*, chap. ii.
[3] *Ibid.* chap. iii.

produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition!"

Tertullian's extremest and most famous utterance on the subject is that pilloried somewhat unfairly by Gibbon[1]: "How shall I admire, how laugh . . . when I behold . . . so many magistrates who persecute the name of the Lord liquefy in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians: so many *sage philosophers* blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars. . . ."[2]

Interpretation of the Scriptures.—If Alexandria was the home of allegorical treatment of the Scriptures, and Antioch the city where historico-grammatical methods of biblical exegesis flourished, Carthage may be taken as representative of yet another type of biblical interpretation.

(1) Its exegesis was, in the first place, *unacademic.* The leading Carthaginian exponents of the Bible were, as a rule, men of affairs, not studious college professors, or learned scholars as at Alexandria and Antioch. They stood for the fact that the Bible was not primarily the happy hunting-ground of philosophers and grammarians, but that its meaning was plain to see for all the members of the Church who came to read it in the right spirit. Simple faith, rather than scholarship, was the true key to its proper understanding.[3] "Nisi credi-

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xv.

[2] *De Spectaculis*, xxx. 30.

[3] *Cf.* also Tert. *de Præscript.* xiv. "'Thy faith,' He says, 'hath saved thee'—not (observe), your skill in the Scriptures."

deretis non intelligetis," "faith precedes knowledge," was Augustine's great principle, in regard to the understanding both of the Scriptures and of Christian doctrine.

(2) But Carthaginian exegesis, underestimating the value of scholarship, also tended to be *unscholarly* and slovenly. None of the great African Fathers, for example, read the Old Testament in the original. They were content to base their interpretation of Scripture on the Greek translation (the LXX), and still more often on the Latin translation of that translation. Similarly, in the New Testament, for the most part, they used the Latin version rather than the original Greek. This would not have been quite so bad had it not been virtually assumed that the Latin Bible (errors and all) was verbally inspired. Many of the Africans, it is true, knew their Latin Bible well as a vast storehouse of texts useful for guidance on all occasions; but some even of their more prominent writers seem to have been woefully ignorant of the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament.

As an illustration of the way in which this disregard of scholarship diminished the value of their interpretation of Scripture, we may instance Tertullian and the phœnix. He describes the "resurrection" of the phœnix, and then proceeds: "What can be more expressive and more significant for our subject; or to what other thing can such a phenomenon bear witness? God, even in His

own Scriptures, says, ' The righteous shall flourish like the *phœnix*,' that is, shall flourish or revive from death, from the grave—to teach you to believe that a bodily substance may be recovered even from the fire." The original Hebrew of the text is rightly rendered by the Authorised Version, " flourish like a palm-tree," but the Septuagint, from which Tertullian has quoted, translates the Hebrew word for " palm-tree " by the Greek word " phœnix," which may occasionally mean phœnix, but is the ordinary word for palm-tree ! And Tertullian was a better biblical scholar than most of the Carthaginians ! [1]

(3) As opposed to the Alexandrian, the African habit of interpretation was *literal* rather than allegorical. Everything in the Bible was thought to be of equal value and equal inspiration. It was held that plain matter-of-fact statements were not to be allegorised and explained away. This was to some extent a healthy rebound from the practice of certain of the Gnostics and other heretics, who simply juggled with the plain and obvious meaning of the Scriptures to suit their own views. But this literalness was often overdone, as it too often came to mean that the letter of Scripture was pressed into service in despite of the spirit and of the real meaning. There was not sufficient care taken to find out what the words of Scripture actually were, as at Alexandria, or to consider

[1] *De Resurr. Carn.* ch. xiii.

the real meaning of passages and clauses in the light of the context and the historical situation, as at Antioch. Fortunately, common sense and a blessed measure of inconsistency sometimes came to the rescue; and they also had another check which kept them from the more dangerous crudities of literalism, of which we shall speak. Many instances might be adduced of the futilities and errors into which this uncompromising literalism led. Tertullian, for example, takes the expression "hand of God" as meaning a corporeal hand. He argues against acting, because actors are in the habit of increasing their height by wearing buskins, whereas our Lord had distinctly said that we cannot "add" to "our stature"! Again, he protests against what he calls the "figurative" explanation of Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, which makes the vision have reference to the scattered and apparently dead nation of the Hebrews, contending that "it is more characteristic of a religious spirit to maintain the truth or the authority of a literal interpretation, such as is required by the sense of the inspired passage." His "literal interpretation" is that real dry bones shall really come to life in a corporeal resurrection![1]

In time, allegorical methods also came into use, though for the most part they were used in the interests of edification rather than for reconciling

[1] *De Resurr. Carn.* ch. xxx.

philosophy and the Scriptures, as at Alexandria. Augustine, for instance, uses both the literal and allegorical methods. But even in the use of allegory, the Carthaginian Fathers were curiously literal and matter-of-fact.

(4) The fourth and last characteristic of Carthaginian exegesis was its dependence on *tradition*. It was recognised that the Scriptures could generally be interpreted and selected to suit very diverse views, and that both literal and allegorical methods of exegesis could be pressed into the service of ingenious heretics and heathen.

The test of correct interpretation was that it should be in accord with the historical and doctrinal traditions of the Church. The " secret " tradition, on which some of the Gnostics, and even to a certain extent some of the Alexandrians, relied was repudiated. Only the recognised tradition of the Church was held to be the true guide to the proper understanding of the Bible.

The Church, as the repository of Christian tradition, was further believed to be the guarantee of the truth of the Scriptures. Augustine even goes so far as to say, " I should not believe in the gospel did not the authority of the Catholic Church compel me." [1] In connection with this, Tertullian held that the Scriptures were the special property of the Church, and that heretics had no right to them, much less to use them in defence of their own position.

[1] Augustine, *c. Ep. Fund.* vi.

"Heretics," he says, "not being Christians, have acquired no right to the Christian Scriptures; and it may be fairly said to them, 'Who are you? When and whence did you come? As you are none of mine, what have you to do with that which is mine? Indeed, Marcion, by what right do you hew my wood? By whose permission, Valentinus, are you diverting the streams of my fountain? . . . this is my property. I have long possessed it. . . . I hold sure title-deeds from the original owners themselves. . . . I am the heir of the Apostles.'" [1] Here we seem to have exemplified, not only the legal trend of mind, but the monopolist and exclusive spirit, so typical of the early Carthaginians.

It may be mentioned here that it was at the Council of Carthage, in A.D. 397, that the canon of the New Testament was formally and apparently finally settled.

Carthaginian Theology and Doctrine of the Church

Theology.—The great difference between Eastern and Western theology was that the Eastern was primarily speculative and idealistic, while the Western was eminently practical and realistic. The former was concerned with Christianity as a system of thought, the latter as a system of conduct. The Alexandrians, for instance, were chiefly interested in Christianity as the supreme

[1] *De Præscript.* xxxvii.

revelation of God and the Truth; the Carthaginians, on the other hand, laid stress on Christianity as the supreme means of salvation from sin and death. To enter into the fulness of the knowledge of God was the great longing of the East (Clement called Christians the true Gnostics—knowledge-men); to experience the saving power of God was the high ambition of the West. And so it came about that Carthage contributed but little to the working out of the great problems connected with the person of Christ,[1] but reserved its strength for the equally important questions dealing with the work of Christ, and especially the problems of Sin and of Grace. One cannot but be struck by the constant emphasis laid by North African writers on the *fact of sin*. They write as men living in a world of wickedness, where selfishness and lust and cruelty obtrude themselves, where evil is rampant, and like to gain the mastery. They were under no illusions as to heathenism, and recognised that it was bad—radically bad. They idealised neither heathen religion nor heathen philosophy, for they could not shut their eyes to so much that was pernicious in both. Whether these might be good, or partly good in theory, mattered little to them, for in actual fact, in daily life, both were permeated with rottenness and filth. They

[1] Generally speaking, Carthage and Rome were in accord with Nicene doctrine, and in the later controversies steered a safe course between the extremes of Alexandria and Antioch.

were not worth saving, and needed sweeping away altogether. Hence the seeming harshness of the Carthaginian apologists.

Similarly with human nature: the Carthaginians frankly recognised it as "desperately wicked." They were under no illusions as to their own hearts and lives. "All have sinned" was to them an obvious truism corroborated by their own bitter experiences and the glaring facts of life around them.

It is a fact worth noting here that most of the great Alexandrian and Antiochian Fathers were men who had lived sheltered lives, whose upbringing and education had given them a bias against at least the more obvious forms of sin, and they were men rightly inclined from their youth up. Most of the Carthaginians, and many of the other great Westerns, happened to have been hot-blooded and high-spirited men, who had felt the full blast of temptation in their youth, and who even in their maturer years were constantly at grips with sin in themselves and in others.

The Easterns were quite ready to admit the fact of sin, but they were more interested in discovering the seeds of goodness, or at least of divine illumination, in man. The Westerns concentrated their attention rather on the corruption of human nature, partly under the impression that, the more corrupt and helpless men were, the more did their salvation redound to the glory and praise of God; not realising, as the Easterns instinctively did, that

the positive act of the creation of goodness and of the fostering of it in the nature of man is at least as wonderful and as worthy of God as the negative act of deliverance from sin and guilt.

Original Sin and the Fall.—Connected with this emphasis on the ever-present fact of sin were various theories and opinions as to the origin and extent of the taint of sin in mankind. It was believed that a bias to sin had been inherited from our first parents in consequence of the Fall,[1] the account of which in Genesis most of the North African writers took quite literally. For the most part, it came to be further held that not only had a tendency to sin been inherited, but that a sinful and guilty state had been transmitted to all the descendants of Adam. Men were held to be sinful, not only by reason of the actual sins they committed, but in virtue of the *original* sin in their nature.[2] Tertullian held that the seeds of good were not altogether destroyed in man's nature. "There is still," he says, "a portion of good in the soul: of that original, divine, and genuine good which is its proper nature," which "cannot be extinguished because it emanates from God."[3]

[1] The Alexandrians were inclined to treat the story allegorically, the Antiochians figuratively.

[2] Tertullian was the first to coin the phrase "original sin" (*vitium originis*).

[3] *De Anima*, chap. xli. Up to the time of Augustine the teachers of the Church declared that though the moral powers might be enfeebled by the Fall, they were not lost. *Cf.* Bethune Baker, *Early Hist. of Christian Doct.* p. 307.

But the corruption of sin has by Satan been "wrought in the soul so completely as to have become, as it were, its natural character." Tertullian "expressly states that man cannot by his own efforts restore himself to the favour of God, but requires that his soul should be renewed by grace from above." [1]

Augustine went further, and affirmed the doctrine of the total corruption of man's nature. "He held that the fall of man was complete, so that the power of spiritual good is entirely lost, and ever afterwards he wills nothing but evil and can do nothing but evil." [2] "The whole race shares the guilt of Adam, and cannot, by any effort of its own, escape the penalty which is due." [2] "By generation Adam's nature as it was after sin, with sin and guilt, death and condemnation, but also the capacity for redemption, passed over to all his posterity." [3]

Now comes the doctrine of Divine *Grace*, the need of which, and the efficacy of which, was so deeply felt in the West; that grace which seems, to those who have experienced it in rescuing them from the power of sin, as something altogether outside their own nature, something simply and solely divine. The great African Fathers, and especially Augustine, having had personal experi-

[1] Kaye's *Tertullian*, p. 249.
[2] *Sic* Bethune Baker, *Early Hist. of Chr. Doct.* p. 309.
[3] *Cf.* Kurtz, *Church Hist.* vol. i. § 53.

ence of its supreme value, were determined that it should not be under-estimated, and they made it the predominant factor of their theology. Unfortunately, in order to exalt grace, they minimised man's freedom of will, and thereby all unintentionally limited the grace which they desired to magnify.

Augustine held that " divine grace, which alone can redeem and save man, attached itself to the remnant of the divine image, and expressed itself in the need of redemption and the capacity for redemption. Grace is, therefore, absolutely necessary in the beginning, middle, and end of the Christian's life. It is granted to man, not because he believes, but that he may believe ; for faith, too, is the work of God's grace." [1] Augustine had at first thought that there was a certain measure of free co-operation on the part of man to his conversion, " but by his whole life's experience he was irresistibly led to acknowledge man's natural inability for any positive co-operation, and to make faith, together with conversion, depend solely upon the grace of God." [1]

There is thus no room left for man's free-will either to reject or accept the grace of God. Here, then, we have the *doctrine of irresistible grace.* Evidently to all men this grace is not given, for all certainly are not saved. This led on directly to Augustine's *doctrine of predestination.* " Since man," he taught, " can contribute nothing to his

[1] *Sic* Kurtz, *Church Hist.* vol. i. § 53.

conversion, the ground of this must be sought, not in the conduct of man, but only in an eternal, unconditioned decree of God," according to which some men are elected to salvation, others are left to their deserved doom. "The ground of this election is the wise and mysterious good pleasure of the divine will, without reference to man's faith, which is, indeed, only a gift of God." [1] Augustine never quite got the length of teaching actual predestination to sin, but some of his followers did.

The so-called "Pelagian" controversy was waged about these three points especially: (1) The total depravity of fallen man; (2) irresistible grace; (3) absolute predestination not on the ground of foreseen merit. Pelagius, who was a "British" monk, and a man of austere piety and considerable learning, held, in opposition to Augustine, that grace was mainly the outward teaching of the law, of the gospel, and of divine providence. Every man, according to him, was born into the world free from sin, and able to choose the path of righteousness. The doctrine of Predestination, as Augustine held it, seemed to him destructive of human responsibility. Pelagius's main position was the real freedom of the will. By freedom he meant "the power of election, in which the power of contrary choice is always present."

He denied the absolute necessity for supernatural and directly assisting grace in any true service of

[1] *Ibid.* § 53.

God on the part of man. In fact, he appeared to teach that the will of man was in some sense independent of the grace of God.

The weakness of Pelagius's position lay in his under-estimation of the power of sin and of the need of divine grace, and in his over-estimation of the part played by the human will. Although he admitted a certain corruption of human nature, he insisted that the will was unimpaired thereby. God had given to all the power of reaching perfection—they had only to will and to work it out.

Pelagius's views were repeatedly condemned at Councils in Carthage (A.D. 412, 416, 418), and finally at the Œcumenical Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431. Augustine's extreme position with regard to predestination and free-will was, however, never really accepted by the mind and conscience of the Church, but his emphasis on the great facts of sin and grace has been endorsed by all the greatest of the theologians of the West since his time.

Doctrine of the Church.—The subject which agitated the North African and Carthaginian Christians more than any other in the third and fourth centuries was that of the essential features of the Church. That salvation was to be found in the Church, and there alone, was assumed as an axiom. Hence the question was urgent: What constitutes the true Church of Christ? and further, What is the exact seat of authority in the Church?

In the course of a series of controversies on

these and kindred questions, a more or less consistent doctrine of the Church was evolved which was gradually accepted by the rest of Western Christendom and hardly questioned until the Reformation.

Tertullian, as we have already seen, regarded the Church as the " witness and keeper of Holy Writ," and as the sole repository of apostolic tradition. As heir to the Apostles, the Church was held to be infallible as the authority on interpretation of the Scriptures and on Christian doctrine.[1] The Church was, too, believed by him to possess the apostolic authority to forgive sins.[2] Where exactly this authority resided Tertullian did not state. Certainly, in his Montanist days he did not hold that it was in the Episcopate. He taught rather the " priesthood " of the whole Church. The essential functions of the Church were, according to his views, vested primarily in the members of the Christian community. In this he was in agreement with the primitive Church, whose " clergy " were, as Professor Kennet puts it, " not priests in a community of laymen," but rather " elders in a Church of priests." One distinctive mark of the true Church on which rested its claims to be authoritative was, according to Tertullian, its

[1] Gwatkin trenchantly points out that this extension of tradition to sundry doctrines and practices, without allowing them to be verified by Scripture and sound learning, is nothing short of a rejection of Christ in favour of the particular church authority we think fit to choose for ourselves.

[2] Tertullian and the Montanists excepted " mortal " sins.

Apostolicity; but this authority was apparently vested in the Christian community as a whole.

Cyprian, however, went a step further, and held that the authority of the Church was vested in the Episcopate. "The Bishop is in the Church, and the Church is in the Bishop."[1] One of the essential functions of the Bishop, he taught, was to guard the tradition of the Church and to expound its doctrine. The authority of each of the Bishops he held to be full and complete in itself, all the Bishops being equal and independent. But he considered that it was the body of Bishops as a whole in which lay the ultimate seat of authority, and in which also the unity of the whole Church universal was to be found.[2] *Episcopacy* was, then, with Cyprian, one of the notes of the true Church.

Cyprian, perhaps more than any other, magnified the clerical, and especially the episcopal, office.

(1) According to him, the Christian Bishop corresponds to the Jewish priest, the presbyters to the Levites, the congregation, or diocese, to the people of Israel. The parallels between the two he worked out in great detail. He thus definitely regarded the Bishop as a *sacerdos* (priest). He "alone can offer sacrifice." "The Lord's passion is the sacrifice which we [the Bishops] offer."[3] Here we clearly have *sacerdotalism.*

[1] *Ep.* 68, § 8. [2] *De Unitate*, §§ 4, 5, and *Ep.* 68, § 8.
[3] *Ep.* 62, § 17.

(2) "The Bishop is also judge of his people," and the "deputy of Christ." [1] "Those who disobey him are guilty of the sin of Korah." "Whoso is an alien from the Bishop is also an alien from Christ." Cyprian's conception of the constitution of the Church was, then, essentially *hierarchical.*

(3) Further, a doctrine of *Apostolic Succession* was implicitly taught by Cyprian. Every Bishop, by the source from which he derived his office, "was the Apostle of his flock," while the authority given to the Apostles descended to the Bishops "who succeeded them by vicarious ordination." [2]

Professor Gwatkin's comment on this last is instructive. "As a Roman magistrate held a defined authority by regular transmission from its last holder, so must it be, and so forsooth it always has been, in the Christian ministry!" [3] Cyprian certainly, here and elsewhere, unconsciously assumed that the constitution of the Christian Church was fundamentally of the same order as the constitution of the Roman State.

We may note, in connection with Cyprian's views on Episcopacy, that he recognised the equality of Bishops in the Church, which led him (1) to resist, or rather, ignore the claims of the Bishop of Rome to judicial authority, and to any inherent supremacy over other Bishops; and (2) to revive and extend the practice of holding episcopal synods, or councils, to deliberate on ques-

[1] *Ep.* 54, § 5. [2] *Ep.* 68, § 4. [3] *Early Ch. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 279.

tions of Church polity and doctrine.[1] Carthage became famed for the number of synods and conferences held there by Cyprian and his successors.

The *Unity* of the Church was Cyprian's special doctrine, to which he attached immense importance. He wrote a book on the subject (*de Unitate*), and his letters are full of it. According to him, separatists, such as the Novatianists, marred the essential unity and scattered the Church of God. And those who separated themselves from the outward unity of the Church as centred in the Bishops cut themselves off from Christ and His salvation. "Any one," he wrote, "who is not with the Bishop is not with the Church," "Whoso separates himself and leaves the Church is separated from the promises which are hers, and will not attain to the rewards that Christ bestows. He cannot have God as Father who has not the Church as Mother. If any one outside the ark of Noah could escape, then he too who has been outside the Church escapes."[2] Such a view of unity is narrow and unsatisfactory.[3] It is the "visible unity of a visible society" which Cyprian identifies with the "one spiritual body of Christ." To be outside this unity of the Church was, according to him, to be beyond the grace of God, "for

[1] The laity were not excluded from these councils, but the presence of Bishops was a *sine qua non*.

[2] *De Unit.* § 6.

[3] Here again we find the monopolist and exclusive trend characteristic of Carthage.

to the Church alone" (and there is but one Church) "has Christ conceded the power of heavenly grace."

Augustine also held to this doctrine, but "he distinguished between the external society (*communio externa*) the visible Church—the general body of Christians, good and bad, and the spiritual society (*communio sanctorum*), which was composed of those who were predestined to salvation, the elect, the members of the Church who were worthy of their calling. The latter were known to God alone."[1] They were not even necessarily limited to believers in the historical Christian religion. He laid less stress than Cyprian did on the Episcopate as the centre of the Church's unity, but emphasised rather the thought that "the presence of the Holy Spirit and of love are the essential notes of the Church." He had no clear views as to the seat of authority in the Church, and "fell back on the *sensus catholicus*, a real and valuable criterion, but one not easy to bring within a logical definition."[2] In a general way he found it in Councils and Bishops; but these he did not look upon as infallible. "By his very vagueness on this point he practically paved the way for the future centralisation of infallible authority in the Papacy."[3]

Church Schisms connected with Carthage.—There

[1] Bethune Baker, *Early Hist. of Christian Doct.* p. 369.

[2] A. Robertson, *M.D.C.B.* p. 90.

were three great ecclesiastical schisms connected with the Carthaginian and North African Church—the Montanist, the Novatianist, and the Donatist. Each of them was in some way connected with the idea of preserving the purity and holiness of the Church. None of them took place on account of false doctrine; they had nothing to do with orthodoxy, but were related to questions of ecclesiastical discipline and order.

I. *The Montanist Schism*, to which Tertullian joined himself, originally took its rise in Phrygia about the middle of the second century, but it found its real home in Africa, where it spread and flourished. It was, in part at least, a revolt against laxity and worldliness in the Church and an attempt to enforce the strictest standard of morality. It was a puritan movement—a movement towards holy living. The aim of the Montanists was, in general, to purge and purify the Church, to keep out of it all things and all persons "doubtful."

The Church must be kept "select," even though the result should be a small and narrow Church. Tests of orthodoxy and conduct must, it was insisted, be most rigidly administered.[1]

Montanism was, at the same time, a protest against the pretensions of Bishops of the Church. The Episcopacy even of the second century did not

[1] The Montanists rejected from the Church all who had been guilty of "mortal" sin.

appear to the Montanists to leave enough scope for the liberty and freedom which the Spirit requires for its working. The Prophet, through whom the Spirit could have full play, seemed to them more fitting as the highest authority in the Church than the Bishop, who even in those early days seems to have been inclined to put expediency, uniformity, and order first, and spiritual things second.

It should be noticed that the Montanists were not properly schismatics in the first instance. They were excommunicated on account of their views. So that the blame of the initial schism rests not with them, but with the rest of the Church, and especially with the Bishops.

II. *Novatianism* was, as we have already seen in our study of Cyprian, a split from the Church because penitent apostates were received back again. The Novatianists called themselves Katharoi (the Pure). They held that "the Church on earth was pure, and could not be defiled by apostates." It was during the course of his controversies with them that Cyprian formulated his conceptions of the Church; they are painfully narrow, it is true, but not so narrow as the Novatianist position.

III. The *Donatists* held similar convictions as to the importance of preserving the purity of the Church from defilement by apostates; and they further contended that anything approaching to

apostasy in a Bishop invalidated his office, and that a Church which centred in an invalidated Episcopacy was no true Church.

In general, they upheld the view that the Church consisted only of those who were pure in life and true to the faith, and, as its holiness was due to the sanctity of its members, no Christian society which admitted any person guilty of grave sin after baptism deserved the name of Catholic.

The Donatists broke away from the Church, in the first instance, on the ground that Mensurius, the Bishop of Carthage, ought to have been deposed because, during the Diocletian Persecution, which raged at the beginning of the fourth century, he had been a "traditor," [1] and was therefore, according to them, virtually a renegade. His archdeacon and successor, Cæcilian, was further accused of having been ordained Bishop by a "traditor," which was considered to have rendered his ordination invalid.

The charges were never properly substantiated, but there can be no doubt that both these men erred on the side of prudence rather than that of heroism, and that they showed little sympathy with many over-rash enthusiasts, who suffered martyrdom though they might easily have escaped.

[1] A "traditor" was one who "delivered up" copies of the Scriptures to the inquisitors during the persecution. Many of the Christians, rather than deliver up their Bibles, suffered martyrdom.

However that may be, the Donatists, disowning Cæcilian, who by this time had become the Bishop of Carthage, elected Majorinus as the rightful Bishop to take his place. Majorinus was soon succeeded (A.D. 315) by Donatus, from whom probably the movement took its name. The dissentients to Cæcilian consistently enough refused to his Church the title of the Church of God, and appropriated that distinction to themselves. This schism spread rapidly until by the time of Augustine there were probably more Donatists than Catholics in North Africa, in spite of the fact that the latter had almost invariably imperial support, while the former had frequently to face persecution, because of their peculiar tenets.

Unfortunately, Donatism drew out and attracted all the fanaticism lying latent in the North African Church, and further became mixed up with a widespread peasant revolt. The religious movement became partly political, and turned into a struggle against all constituted authority. Many of the Donatists resorted to violence in their contest with the Catholics. Bands of religious "hooligans," who called themselves "Soldiers of Christ" and "Christian Champions," roamed about the country terrorising whole districts, robbing, murdering, and burning, while at the same time they preached freedom and fraternity. Some of them had a mania for martyrdom, and deliberately provoked heathen idolaters, and even

civil authorities, to put them to death. Failing that, not a few committed suicide. These horrible excesses, and indeed the violence of these people generally, were entirely disapproved by Donatus and the bulk of his followers. But they discredited the movement, and gave Donatism a sinister reputation with the Church outside as well as within North Africa. In A.D. 400 Augustine took up the matter. For some time there had been a literary duel going on between the Catholic and Donatist leaders, and the latter sometimes seemed to get the best of it, for there was much to be said for their position.

Augustine was soon, however, master of the situation from a controversial point of view, and eventually, after much controversy and many Councils and by dint of strong pressure brought to bear by the State, the Donatists were reconciled to the Church. "It would have been beside the purpose for Augustine to insist, as Cyprian would have done, upon the Episcopate, for that the Donatists possessed, or upon the unity of the Church, for that they claimed for themselves. The question at issue went behind these points to the spiritual conditions necessary to the *saving* efficacy of means of grace. This exists, argued Augustine, only in the Catholic Church. . . . In a sense the Holy Spirit operates in schismatical sacraments. . . . But it is only in the Catholic Church that the Spirit operates as the *Spirit of*

peace and love." [1] As to the holiness of the Church which the Donatists considered so essential, he took the ground that it depended on the holiness of its Divine Founder.

As a matter of fact, Augustine somewhat begged the whole question. The holiness of the members, and perhaps especially of the ministers of a Church, is an essential element in the holiness of the Church itself, and is the only guarantee that they are in the spiritual line of succession from, and in direct contact with, the holy Founder of the Church. Furthermore, the assumption that the Spirit of peace and love was to be found only in his own Church, and not in the Donatist communion, was quite unjustifiable. One can only say that the Donatists had rather less excuse for denying that the self-styled Catholics were the true Church than the Catholics had for rejecting the claims of the Donatists. That both, outwardly distinct, as they were, and differing in point of view, could possibly be members of the One Body of Christ which is the Church never apparently occurred to either.

There is one further point regarding Donatism which must not be overlooked. Almost from the first Donatus and his followers stood out against state interference with the Church. "What has the Emperor to do with the Church?" was his memorable saying on one occasion when he refused

[1] *Sic* A. Robertson, *M.D.C.B.*

for his Church a subsidy from the State. He certainly stood for the doctrine of a Free Church. And one of the reasons which was urged for separation from the "Catholics" was that these "committed fornication with the princes of this world," an accusation which was at that time not far from the truth.

Augustine, on the other hand, in his great book entitled the *City of God*, contended that Church and State were dependent on one another. "The State," he held, "is in the Church, and is bound to carry out the Church's aims." "One unchristian corollary of Augustine's doctrine was the persecution of heretics as a duty of the Christian State. In his earlier days he disapproved of this, but the stress of the Donatist controversy changed his mind." [1] Largely owing to him, the "reconciliation" of the Donatists was hastened by the interference of the State, which adopted drastic measures to compel men to enter the "true Church."

The Donatist schism did much to shatter the Church in North Africa. The invasion of the Vandals, and ultimately of the Arabs, finally destroyed it, so that to all intents and purposes that great Church has disappeared.

[1] Robertson, *M.D.C.B.*

CHAPTER X

ROME, THE IMPERIAL CITY

As we shall see, Rome was not at the first a Latin Church, but a Greek one. Yet from the first it seems to have caught the Roman spirit of discipline. In the Roman Church even theology was subordinated to discipline, and authority took rank before logic. Like Carthage, Rome was legal and practical in its Christianity; but, unlike any other of the great Churches of ancient Christendom, it was infused with the spirit of empire, world-wide empire. If Carthage stood for organisation of the corporate body of the Church, Rome stood for administration. The corporate unity of the whole Church, with itself as centre, was its ideal from very early days; and further, it even aimed at a universal Church which should embrace every people and every race, till all mankind should be in the fold of the "true Church."

Alexandria's special contribution to Christendom was, as we have seen, breadth of outlook. Rome contributed breadth, too, but it was administrative breadth. It had not the vision save of outward things; even its vision of a universal Church was

vitiated by the externality of its conception. It is not surprising that this spirit of world-wide empire should be found in the Roman Church, situated as it was in the heart of the imperial system. Like modern Britain, Rome thought in continents. She was the centre of the civilised world. Every other place was provincial; Rome alone was the metropolis.

The Roman Church soon became the natural centre of Christendom; the brief importance of the Ephesian Church was quickly forgotten, and though many Churches resisted her claim to authority over them, none save Constantinople ever dreamed of claiming to be her superior.

Her history is in the main the history of her Bishops. Of the rank and file of the Church during the first five or six centuries there is little recorded. Compared with the other Churches, Rome produced singularly few remarkable men. With one exception,[1] during the first three centuries there were,

[1] The one exception was Hippolytus, who seems to have been either Bishop of Portus, the commercial port of Rome, or more probably a rival Bishop to Callistus, who was Bishop of Rome early in the third century. He was one of the most learned Christians of his time, and wrote numerous commentaries on the Scriptures. His greatest work was his *Refutation of the Heresies*, a book displaying extraordinary erudition. From this book, and fragments remaining of his other works, it is evident that Hippolytus must have been an intellectual giant. He seems to have been a puritan and a rigorist in his tendencies, and may have been a schismatic. He died a martyr in the mines of Sardinia. In spite of his literary service to the Church, his memory soon fell into obscurity, from which it has been but recently rescued. Even Eusebius's knowledge of him was very

even among the Bishops, no thinkers worthy of the name, no great biblical scholars, no great apologists. Yet it was a great Church, and has left its mark on the world for good and for ill as no other has done.

Beginnings of the Church.—We have no certain knowledge as to how Christianity was first introduced into Rome. It certainly was not by one of the Apostles, though it was probably at a very early date. It is, indeed, likely that the Church there was never definitely "founded," but that it came into existence almost casually through the presence of some unknown Christians who were drawn there primarily by business, but were naturally and instinctively missionary, as most of the early Christians seem to have been. The earliest Christian community, such as it was, seems to have been Jewish and not Gentile. The first suggestion of its existence comes from the famous notice by Suetonius that the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome (A.D. *c.* 52) on account of disturbances among them which had arisen "impulsore Chresto" (at the instigation of a certain Chrestus). Chrestus appears to be an error for Christus, and it seems probable that what had really happened was that the disturbances in the Jewish community had been about Christianity.

vague. What is almost certainly a statue of him, erected shortly after his death, was discovered three centuries ago, and is now to be seen in Rome. It is unique among Christian antiquities.

The Italian Jews, Aquila and Priscilla, were amongst those who were forced to leave Rome at this time. One gets the impression, from the account in Acts, that the two were Christians before they met Paul. If so, they were probably among the first-fruits of the original Christian community at Rome. A few years later, when they had returned to Rome (A.D. *c.* 58), we find Paul speaking of "the Church that is in their house."[1] Whether that means that their house was the centre of the group of Christians in Rome, or that theirs was one of several "Churches" in the city, is impossible to say for certain. It is quite possible that it may have been Aquila and Priscilla who restarted the Roman Church.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans, written about A.D. 58, indicates that a flourishing Church was already in existence, in which there was still a strong, if not preponderating, Jewish element.[2] When Paul came to the city as a prisoner some years later (A.D. 61), he was welcomed by the "brethren"; but the leading Roman Jews, according to Luke's account, appear to have known singularly little about the Christians there, or about Christianity, to which they refer as a "sect," *i.e.* presumably as a peculiar form of Judaism. One has to remind oneself of the vastness of Rome, and also of the enor-

[1] Rom. xvi. 4.

[2] There appears to have been a strong Jewish, and even Judaising section in the Church, until well on into the second century; *cf.*, *e.g.*, the *Clementine Recognitions*.

mous number of Jews there, to realise that a group of Christians, which might be quite an important section of the Christian Church as a whole, might still be an insignificant and almost unnoticed body in Rome itself.

Paul's enforced residence in Rome, in spite of the restrictions under which he worked, must have been a great stimulus to the Christians there, and must have helped to strengthen and establish the Church. Certainly he made it an opportunity for the further spread of the gospel. "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorium, and to all the rest, and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." [1]

For some reason or other, however, a considerable section of the Roman Christians seem to have acted independently of Paul, almost in opposition to him. Probably these would belong to the original nucleus of the Church there. They seem to have been jealous of Paul—possibly they distrusted him as a new-comer. The Church in Rome was evidently not yet one whole. What probably united it more than anything else was the outbreak of the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64, a fiery trial for the Church, when the caprice of the Emperor singled

[1] Phil. i. 12–14.

out the adherents of the new and somewhat mysterious sect as scapegoats on whom to fasten the crime of setting fire to the city.[1] From this time, also, Christianity no longer remained unknown in Rome, though for many years it was still popularly misunderstood.

Although the beginnings of the Church here were obscure and humble, and though very soon members of the despised class, slaves, were admitted into the Christian fellowship, at an early stage the Christianity of the Imperial city made its way into high places, possibly through these very slaves. Paul speaks of "the saints of Cæsar's household"[2]; but before that, even before the Epistle to the Romans, we find Pomponia Græcina, the wife of no less a personage than Aulus Plautius, who had been the first Roman commander in Britain, to be already a Christian.[3] Some thirty years later, Christianity appeared in the bosom of the Imperial family itself. The Emperor Domitian's cousin, Flavius Clemens, Consul of Rome (A.D. 95), and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, who was Domitian's niece, both suffering for the faith, the former being executed and the latter exiled

[1] *Cf.* Tacitus, *Ann.* xv. 44.

[2] Phil. iv. 22. "Cæsar's household" does not mean his family circle, though it may include even that; it is rather the enormous retinue of servants and officials connected with the Court.

[3] So at least may be gathered from Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii. 32. She was accused of "foreign superstition" and lived a "melancholy life."

(A.D. 96).[1] That the Roman Church could so soon include such converts shows how rapidly and how surely it was making its influence felt, and how important that influence was, even for the Empire.

The exact date and manner of Paul's death is not certain, but there is no good reason to doubt the tradition that he was martyred in Rome (A.D. 67 or 68)[2] shortly before the close of Nero's reign. As Roman citizen, he would be beheaded, and tradition tells us that the execution took place outside the gates on the Ostia Road. Did the Roman Church realise his greatness, one wonders? She has certainly never understood him since, nor even appreciated him as other Churches have done. He never loved the established order of things as she did. St. Peter, with his fear of innovation, and his ingrained respect for the "powers that be," was always more truly after her heart than St. Paul, with his passion for the "freedom" wherewith "Christ doth set us free," and his sweeping enthusiasms.

St. Peter and the Church of Rome.—There is a tradition, though not a very early one,[3] that the Apostle Peter was Bishop of Rome for five-and-twenty years. Although this tradition will not bear investigation, there is some reason to believe

[1] Eus. *H.E.* iii. 18.

[2] Or, according to the more widely accepted view, A.D. 64.

[3] Early fourth century (Eusebius), and by some traced back to early third century.

that Peter visited Rome, and took some part in building up the Church there. The evidence is, however, conclusive against his having been the actual founder of the Church, or having laboured there for more than a few years at most. That he had not been in Rome before A.D. 58 is evident from the fact that Paul makes no mention of him and his work in the Epistle to the Romans, written in that year, though he makes many other personal references. It is inconceivable, moreover, that Paul, who endeavoured to work on the foundation of no other Apostle, would have thus ignored Peter had the latter already been labouring in Rome, or been the head of the Church there.

There is, again, no mention in the last chapter in Acts of Peter's presence at Rome, much less of his leadership there, while the letters of the first imprisonment tell the same tale.

It seems certain, then, that if Peter ever did visit Rome it must have been after Paul's first imprisonment, or, at least, after the last of the letters written then.

When, then, did Peter come to Rome, if at all ? The two names of Peter and Paul were very early[1] linked together in connection with Rome, as if they had worked there together. It has been plausibly suggested that Peter came to Rome perhaps before the close of Paul's first imprisonment at the express invitation of Paul, as an object-lesson

[1] *E.g.* in Clement's *Ep. to the Corinthians*, A.D. 96.

in the unity of the Church to both Gentile and Jewish Christians, especially, perhaps, to the Judaising party amongst the latter.

"If the Churches saw the Apostle of the Gentiles and the leader of the Apostle of the Circumcision taking counsel together and working together at Rome, they would learn the lesson of the unity of the Church as they could have done no other way." [1] Moreover, Paul believed that his imprisonment must soon end one way or another, and he realised that, even if he were set at liberty, there was work to be done by him further afield, and, "as the far-reaching needs and opportunities of the Church of Rome pressed on him, he might well realise how manifold would be the gain resulting from the presence there of Peter." [2]

It is possible, then, but by no means certain, that Peter came to Rome about A.D. 63, and worked for a short time at least in partnership with Paul. He may have written his first Epistle from the Imperial city.[3] It is a letter from a man with the true pastoral spirit, but none of the prelatic temper. The writer has evidently been profoundly influenced by Paul. Mark is mentioned as being with Peter at the time of writing, and a tradition which seems trustworthy has connected Mark's Gospel with Peter's preaching at Rome. Mark is supposed to

[1] Chase, Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, vol. iii. p. 778.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] "In Babylon" (1 Pet. v. 23) would then be a cryptic way of saying "in Rome."

have compiled his Gospel at the request of the Roman Christians. Peter is said to have been martyred at Rome [1] perhaps during the Neronian Persecution, A.D. *c.* 64, perhaps as late as 68. Legend states that he was crucified, and that head downwards. As to Peter's ever having been Bishop of Rome, it is not even hinted at by any of the earlier writers who mention him in connection with the city. Irenæus, writing in the last quarter of the second century, gives a list of the Bishops of Rome, and explicitly states that the first Bishop was Linus, the second Anencletus, and the third Clement. Peter and Paul, he says, "founded" the Church there and "entrusted Linus with the ministry of the episcopate." [2] Tertullian, writing twenty years later, differs from Irenæus by not reckoning Linus or Anencletus, but Clement as "ordained by Peter."

Linus [3] and Anencletus [4] are, as a matter of fact, very shadowy figures, and it is open to question whether they were ever really "Bishops" in the later sense of the term. As to Clement, it is a curious fact that he, in the one authentic writing of his which we possess, though writing as from the Christian community at Rome (A.D. 96), never

[1] Clement (A.D. 96) relates the martyrdom of Peter, but does not say that it took place at Rome. It is not till about A.D. 170 that it is definitely stated to have been at Rome. Caius of Rome (*c.* 200) says that the tombs of Peter and Paul were shown at Rome.

[2] Iren. *Hær.* iii. 3. 3.

[3] *Cf.* 2 Tim. iv. 21.

[4] Otherwise Anacletus, Ancletus, or Cletus.

hints that he himself is the Bishop; while Ignatius, the martyr-Bishop of Antioch, writing some fifteen or twenty years later to the Roman Church, again does not hint at the existence of a Bishop there, though in his letters to other Churches he emphasises the fact that they have Bishops. What contemporary evidence there is, in fact, suggests that the episcopal system (*i.e.* the centralising of authority and of certain spiritual functions in a single personage in the local Christian community) was not adopted in Rome until comparatively late, half a century at least after the death of Peter and Paul! [1]

At a later period, when Episcopacy obtained everywhere in Christendom, it was taken for granted that it had been so from the beginning, and a little guess-work often took place in the matter of episcopal "pedigrees"! This may not have been the case in the Roman Church, but what little evidence there is points in that direction.

Roman Church at first Greek, not Latin.—The Church at Rome was at first not Latin-speaking, but Greek. It continued to be more Greek than Latin until well on into the third century (as indeed did most of the Churches of the West). As we have seen, it was Carthage, not Rome, which was the first real home of Latin Christianity, and from which the earliest Latin Christian literature emanated.

[1] Episcopacy was adopted by some Churches and districts later than others. (*Cf.* Lightfoot.)

With the exception of three (Clement, Pius, and Victor) all the first fifteen Bishops of Rome have Greek names. All the earliest extant Christian writings connected with Rome and the West (except in Africa) are Greek, or originally written in that language. Paul wrote to the Roman Church in Greek, so also did Ignatius of Antioch. Mark's Gospel, which, according to early tradition, was written for the Roman Church, was in Greek. The letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the original of the Muratorian Fragment, and indeed almost every other known document emanating from the Roman Church during the first three centuries, were likewise in Greek, and not Latin. Even Hippolytus of Rome, in the early third century, wrote in Greek. Moreover, vestiges of Greek ritual and a Greek liturgy were long to be found in the Roman Church. The Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy), which still lingers in the Latin service, is a survival of this.

Natural Supremacy of the Roman Church.—The fact that the Roman Church remained Greek for so long had an important bearing on its position in Christendom. As part of a Greek colony in the Latin capital, it kept in touch with the Christian Churches of both the Greek East and the Latin West, and became the natural link between the two in a way which would have been impossible had it become prematurely Latin.

It was the interpreter of the East to the West,

and the most convenient meeting-place for the two. Consequently, its outlook was broader than that, for instance, of Antioch or Carthage, for the former was out of touch with Western Christendom, and the latter with the Eastern Churches.

One cannot properly understand the position of the Roman Church in Christendom unless one realises to some extent the paramount dignity and importance of the city of Rome itself, both on account of its impressive history and its position as the ruling city and capital of the world. Almost insensibly, but inevitably, the enormous prestige of the city came to attach itself to the Church also.

The Christian community in Rome was almost from the first one of the largest and richest in Christendom. Amongst its members were personages of high rank; so much so that Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to Rome, speaks as if certain of the Christians there were sufficiently influential to interfere with the course of the law and to save him from his fate. Not only were the Roman Christians rich and influential, but they were hospitable and generous; their hospitality was world-wide, and their gifts flowed out to brethren in need throughout the Empire.[1] In early times, too, the Church was in the forefront, in the place of danger when the spirit of persecution manifested itself, while it was often the first to warn other Churches when storms were brewing.

[1] Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 23.

All these facts served to give the Roman Church a position of unique importance among the other great Churches of Christendom. In the West its importance was further enhanced by the fact that no other Western Church could lay claim to an apostolic foundation, while most of them, directly or indirectly, owed their existence to Rome.

It was the fond boast of Rome that no heresies ever originated there. It is just as true to say that none of the great Christian doctrines originated there either. But, though no heresy may have taken its rise in Rome, nearly every heresy gravitated there sooner or later. One after another all the heresies, and almost every heresiarch, laid claim to Roman hospitality. Valentinus and Marcion, the famous Gnostics, Praxeas the Patripassian, Theodotus the Monarchian, Tatian and Sabellius, to mention no others, found their way to Rome and sought acceptance for their views in the Church there. Rome, as it were, became the great "clearing-house" for all the heresies and conflicting theories of the Church at large during the early centuries. "On all these opinions the Bishop of Rome was almost compelled to sit in judgment, and he must receive, authorise, or condemn; he was a proselyte whom it would be the ambition of all to gain." [1]

The Roman Church and its Bishops proved by no means infallible, and were frequently misled

[1] Milman, *Latin Christianity*, p. 38.

by plausible heretics. But the rest of Christendom saw to it that Rome should not go too far wrong. By means of much good advice, and a natural distaste for extreme positions which sometimes led to curious doctrinal compromises, the Church of Rome managed to steer a fairly straight course doctrinally. In matters of theology Rome was remarkably fair-minded and moderate, seldom blinded by the partisan spirit, very possibly because its chief interest did not lie so much in matters of doctrine as in questions relating to ecclesiastical procedure and church practices. This impartiality and capacity for balanced judgment led to Rome being regarded as a kind of court of appeal in not a few of the doctrinal disputes which agitated Christendom. In the great Christological controversies between Antioch and Alexandria, for instance, although the matters in question were settled by Church Councils, it was Rome which really acted as umpire, and whose judgment was finally accepted.

Roman Theology.—Rome, as a Church, made no specific contribution to theology. Of constructive theologians she had well-nigh none. There were probably fewer native theologians among the Bishops of Rome than there were at one time among the bakers of Constantinople! Other Churches laboured, and Rome entered into their labours. With regard to the endless speculations on the transcendental aspects of religion which

filled the mind of the Greek and Eastern Churches, she had little sympathy, and less interest. For the most part she stood aloof from these, or contented herself with interfering as an impartial outsider when it seemed to her own advantage to do so. Practically, she acted the part of the fairly intelligent "man in the street," though of course with much pomp and dignity. In the questions at issue Rome rarely had much expert knowledge, and probably failed to grasp the processes of reasoning on either side. She judged mostly by results. Tradition, her own dignity, and common sense were her criteria; and, as a rule, she judged fairly correctly. In the great Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century Rome fell under the spell of Athanasius, and accepted his theological position, though her "narrow and hard vocabulary could hardly express it in adequate terms." This adhesion of Rome to the Nicene Doctrine was "a passive acquiescence in the dogmatic system which had been wrought out by the profounder theology of the Eastern divines, rather than a vigorous and original examination on her part of these mysteries." She derived her theology and Christology, in the main, from Alexandria, though she avoided the extreme Alexandrianism of Eutyches. Her doctrines of Sin and Salvation were likewise not of native growth, but taken from Carthage, and especially from Augustine. Even her doctrines of the Church were not of her own

construction, but were chiefly Carthaginian too, both in origin and development.

On the whole, Roman theology and doctrine was much the same as the Carthaginian, but was even more legalistic in form and spirit. The speculative interest was almost entirely absent. It was all conceived in the practical interest. Christian doctrine in general resolved itself, so far as Rome was concerned, into a set of rules and precedents. As a light to lighten those who were seeking to grow in the knowledge of God it was hardly considered at all. Christian doctrine, in fact, represented to the Roman Church the various things which had to be accepted by every loyal Christian, whether they were understood or not, and which it was disloyal not to believe.

CHAPTER XI

ROME (*continued*)

Attitude towards Heathenism.—During the "Greek Period" of the Roman Church there was nothing distinctive in its attitude towards heathenism. There was no broad-minded attempt to recognise and appreciate the fragments of truth and revelation found in heathen philosophy, such as was characteristic of Alexandria, nor, on the other hand, was there uncompromising hostility to everything connected with heathen religions, from philosophy to popular custom, like that which obtained in the Carthaginian Church.

Later on, however, when Christianity became the predominant religion, and heathens began to throng into the Church, Rome took practical measures to cope with the new situation, and tacitly adopted the policy of *Adaptation.*

It was felt that, under the circumstances, to endeavour, like the Africans, to ensure the purity of the Church by insisting on stringent standards of morality for all its members, more especially in the matter of entire separation from anything even savouring of heathenism, was not altogether

practical. Christianity, it was thought, must not be made too difficult or too unattractive for the mass of semi-heathen folk who had entered, or wished to enter, the fold of the Church, where alone salvation lay.

The Roman people and the Roman Church were deeply imbued with respect for long-established custom. The Church, therefore, met heathenism half-way, and, instead of abolishing heathen customs as such, retained them wherever it seemed feasible, purging them as far as possible from actual immorality, modifying, adapting, and transforming them. For instance, heathen festivals, and many of the more or less innocent practices attached to them, were converted into Christian holidays, or merged into those which happened to coincide with them as to the season of the year. Christmas, All Souls' Day, and even Easter—all have heathen festivals as ancestors and heathen customs attached to them, although the festival of the Resurrection had for some time, at least, a separate existence. The cult of saints and martyrs, too, lent itself apparently to the Church's task of weaning folk away from the worship of heathen idols. What happened here in a great many cases was that the images of heathen deities were renamed, and, as it were, rechristened as Christian saints, and henceforth worshipped as such with the rites of the Church, and not infrequently with certain of the original heathen rites also. The Roman policy was, in fact, a well-meant

but ill-advised attempt to make the old garments of heathenism new by dint of much patching, but especially by giving them new names. But instead of heathenism being successfully Christianised by these methods of adaptation and modification, what happened was that the Christian Church ran grave risk of being itself heathenised.

Although the principle of Christianising pagan rites and customs had been coming into vogue in the Roman Church long before his time, it was Gregory the Great who definitely legitimatised and formulated it, albeit not in its extremest form. The following instructions, written by him (601) to his missionaries in Britain, illustrate the Roman position and at the same time suggest what may be said in favour of it:

" . . . The temples of the idols ought not to be destroyed . . . for if the temples are well built it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God: that the nations, seeing that these temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and, knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account, as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs whose relics are there deposited, they may . . .

celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating . . . to the end that, whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to efface everything at once from their obdurate minds: because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, not by leaps." (Bede, *H.E.* xxx.)

Rome as a Missionary Church.—The attitude of Rome in the matter of the propagation of the gospel, or rather of the extension of the Church, was imperial. Just as the ancient Romans had the vision of a universal Empire, so the Roman Church had the vision of a universal world-wide Church. She deliberately aimed at gathering whole countries and kingdoms and nations in the bosom of the Church. The conversion of Western Europe was of course partly due to the natural growth of the Church, and to the occasional efforts of independent missionaries; but it was due almost as much to missionary campaigns initiated from Rome and carefully arranged there.

One result of this was that not a few countries owed their Christianity directly to the Roman Church and looked to it as their natural source and centre. The imperial instinct of the Roman Church, and its administrative ability, thus found full play.

If the Church of Rome came to look upon herself as the head and centre of Christendom, she at least realised some of the obligations involved in such a position, and did not shirk her responsibility.

On the other hand, she soon came to recognise no Church that did not bow to her dictates, while her conception of the spirituality and unity of the Church were marred by her idea of the importance of uniformity, more particularly in externals.

Her missionary tactics, like her conception of the Church, were on a large scale, and wholesale methods of conversion were much in use, though individual dealing was not altogether neglected. Generally speaking, the attempt was made to induce tribes or nations, as a whole, to accept Christianity, and induce as many as possible to submit to Christian baptism, and thereby enter the pale of the Church. Individual dealing, instruction in the fundamentals of Christianity, and training in Christian virtue came later—when possible. The Roman missionaries, wherever they could, treated with kings and princes, coming to them as ambassadors from the Bishop of Rome, as if he were the religious Emperor of the West. When these were persuaded, their people as a rule followed suit. Thus whole crowds of heathen often entered the Church, with no real change of heart and mind, and very little knowledge of even the elements of the Christian religion.

Rome's Pretensions to Primacy.—The Roman

Church was not content with the deference accorded to her because of her great position as Church of the capital, and because of her natural qualifications for leadership; and the Roman instinct and capacity for government and administration, in time, became a lust for rule. At a comparatively early period she began to claim an inherent right to dictate to other Churches, and to look upon herself as the seat of authority in the Church as a whole. This was never conceded in the East, but in the West it gradually came to be taken for granted, although for several centuries the Roman pretensions were either opposed or ignored.

The claim to primacy came to be based on the assumption that the Bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter, and as such was the sole legatee of the authority over the Church and the primacy over the other Apostles, supposed to have been granted to Peter by our Lord. Of course, even if the Apostle Peter had been the centre and representative of the unity of the Church, and the seat of its authority, and even if he had been the founder and first Bishop of the Roman Church, it did not in the least follow that this central representation must reside permanently in the Roman Church, or that Peter's "primacy" must descend to each Bishop of Rome, or to any one else.

The first notable instance of Roman pretensions occurred towards the end of the second century, when Victor, the Bishop of Rome (*c.* 190), threatened

to excommunicate the Churches of Asia Minor because they alone did not agree with the custom of the Roman Church as to the date for the celebration of Easter. And this he did, even though the Asiatic Churches claimed to be following the custom of the Apostle John in the matter.

This high-handed action on the part of Victor shocked the Church. The Asiatic Churches would not allow that the Bishop of Rome had any right to dictate to them in such a matter, and maintained that their own church tradition was at least as reliable and binding as that of the Church of Rome. Many other Bishops also strongly objected to the position taken up by Victor. Among them was Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who wrote to Victor, severely rebuking his "unchristian arrogance," although agreeing with him on the point disputed. Victor had to withdraw his threat of excommunication.

It is characteristic of the Roman Church that this attempt to assert its authority had to do with a matter of ecclesiastical practice, not doctrine, and was made in the interests of uniformity.

Later on, about the middle of the third century, the Roman Bishop Stephen "allowed himself to be carried away by the same spirit of hierarchical arrogance as his predecessor Victor. In a dispute about the validity of baptism administered by heretics (by no means important), it was his wish also to obtrude the tradition of the Roman Church on all

other Churches as an invariable and decisive law, and he excommunicated the Churches of Asia Minor and North Africa who refused to acknowledge such a rule " (Neander, *Hist. of Christian Religion and Church*, vol. i. p. 299).

Cyprian, in the name of his fellow Bishops of North Africa, dealt with Stephen on this occasion, and admonished him soundly for his arrogance in thus taking upon himself to coerce and dictate to the Churches. Stephen had taken his stand on Roman tradition, but Cyprian would have none of this. " Whence," he says, " comes that tradition ? It is not collected from the words of our Lord and from the authority of the Gospels, is it ? " [1] And he suggests that Stephen's boasted tradition is nothing more than mere custom. " Custom, which has crept in among some, ought not to hinder the truth from prevailing : for custom without truth is but antiquity of error." [1] Firmilian, Bishop of Cappadocean Cæsarea, was still more severe in his censure of the Bishop of Rome ; scoffed at Stephen's boasted descent from Peter ; and declared that, by his threatened action, he was acting as a schismatic and disturbing the peace and unity of the whole Church.

But though these earlier attempts at primacy were for the time being defeated, the Roman Bishops never relaxed their efforts, and went on steadily taking advantage of every opportunity

[1] *Ep.* lxxiv.

to forward their claims and consolidate their position.

After the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Emperor and practically as that of the Empire, the importance of the See of Rome became greatly enhanced, and the Bishop of Rome rose at once to the rank of a great accredited functionary in the Empire. And, so long as the Emperor made Rome his headquarters, an appeal to him in ecclesiastical affairs was virtually an appeal to the Bishop of Rome (*cf.* Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. ii.).

When Constantinople became the seat of Empire Rome lost some of her dignity as the metropolis. She still retained sway over the West, however, both in her civil and religious capacity; while the very fact of the absence of the Emperor from Rome saved the Church there, and especially its Bishop, from becoming a mere appanage of the Court, as tended to be the case in Constantinople, and gave the Bishop a chance to grow strong and independent.

The history of the Roman Church from this time onwards for several centuries was, in the main, the history of the struggles of the Popes after supreme ecclesiastical authority; and of course this meant far more, now that Christianity was practically the state religion, than it had done when Christianity was a persecuted, or at best a barely tolerated, religion.

Incidentally the position was complicated (*a*) by the counter-claims of Constantinople and (*b*) for a time also by the Imperial assumption of the supreme right to command and to forbid in church matters. The Roman Church welcomed Imperial patronage and favour, but to Imperial dictation it refused to submit. Both these claims the Popes fought steadily, and eventually became independent of both Constantinople and the Emperor, though at the cost of schism.

Although the See of Rome was of world-wide importance, the same could be said of but few of its Bishops apart from their position. Among the more outstanding we may take four: Damasus, Innocent I, Leo I, and Gregory I.

The chief claim of *Damasus* to distinction is that he was the patron of the great Jerome, and encouraged him in making his famous translation of the Scriptures, which was later known as the Vulgate, and which has, perhaps, done more to unify the branches of the Roman Church than anything else. Damasus is further interesting as having reopened and restored the Catacombs of Rome. Nearly all of them bear traces of his labours.

Innocent I.—Innocent I (402–417) was by birth a Roman, though not actually a native of the city itself. He seems to have been one of the first of the Popes who definitely tried to break down the conception that ecclesiastical supremacy was primarily derived from political supremacy. The

Church of Rome had, as we have seen, originally derived her high position from the fact that she was the Church of the capital and centre of the world, and as such deference had been accorded to her. But Constantinople was now the political capital of the Empire, and as such was, with some success, claiming for her Church a corresponding ecclesiastical position. Innocent asserted strongly that it was not the political importance of a city, but the apostolicity of its origin, which gave it ecclesiastical authority.[1] So, not as Bishop of the ancient capital of the world, but definitely as the spiritual successor of St. Peter, who was now acknowledged to be the chief of the Apostles and centre of the Church, he claimed the obedience and veneration of Christendom.

Innocent furthermore claimed for the Roman See the perpetual right to act as the court of appeal for Bishops condemned as heretics. This power had actually been conferred on Pope Julius in A.D. 343 by the Western Council of Sardica as a matter of temporary convenience. The decree of the Council had been intended to apply only to Julius. The whole thing had been forgotten until Innocent revived it as an obligation on the part of all Bishops to submit all serious cases to the decision of the Roman See. This right of

[1] Writing to the Bishop of Antioch, Innocent suggests that that city also has certain legitimate claims to a subordinate primacy, "but not so much on account of the grandeur of the city itself, as because it is shown to be the first apostolic See."

appeal to Rome was later confirmed by the Emperor Valentinian III, A.D. 445, when Leo I was Pope.

It was Innocent to whom the Carthaginian Synod applied in A.D. 404 to intercede with the Emperor for help to put down the Donatists. It was he to whom appeal was made by both sides in the Pelagian controversy (415–456). He took the side of Augustine. His successor, Zosimus, however, sided with Pelagius. Innocent, again, it was who championed the great Chrysostom when he was attacked as a follower of Origen by the Bishop of Alexandria, and by Epiphanius, the heresy-hunter.

Innocent was Bishop of Rome when Alaric and his Goths invaded Italy. He did his utmost to negotiate between Alaric and the Emperor Honorius so as to save Rome from destruction, but in vain. The subsequent Fall of Rome (410), marked the close of the old Roman Paganism. Alaric, as a Christian, though an Arian, had as far as possible spared the Christians and Christian property when the city was sacked and partially destroyed. "Nothing pagan escaped except what found shelter under Christianity." The heathen aristocracy of Rome, who had been the bulwark of the old religion, and the whole external fabric of heathen religion and worship in Rome were shattered beyond mending. Out of the ruin of a pagan city rose a Christian Rome. The pagan hierarchy and the heathen temples were never

restored, while the ancient aristocracy and the Emperor never again made the city their home. "The capture of Rome by Alaric was one of the great steps by which the Pope rose to his plenitude of power. There could be no question from this time that the greatest man in Rome was the Pope; he alone was invested with permanent and real power; he alone possessed all the attributes of supremacy." [1]

Leo I (A.D. 440–460), who became Bishop of Rome about a quarter of a century after Innocent I, was the strongest man of his age. If sheer strength of character and commanding personality, combined with a strict sense of justice and inflexible orthodoxy, constitute greatness, then he well deserves the title Great which has been conferred on him. He was a typical Roman, austere and indomitable; fair-minded, according to his lights. He had an extraordinarily clear, judicial mind, and a strong sense of the responsibilities and the dignity of his office. The distinctly Christian virtues, such as humility, meekness, sympathy, and tenderness, he lacked, and did not feel their need, for to him they savoured too much of weakness. Milman says of him: "All that survived of Rome, of her unbounded ambition, her inflexible perseverance, her dignity in defeat, her haughtiness of language, her belief in her own eternity, and in her indefensible title to universal dominion, her respect

[1] Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. i. p. 139.

for traditionary and written law and of unchangeable custom, might seem centred in him alone."

He was the first writer of real distinction in the Roman Church since Hippolytus, and the first to make his mark as a great preacher. This lack of Roman preachers is significant. The leaders of that Church generally preferred to use the word of command rather than that of exhortation or persuasion. On his election as Pope, Leo at once took upon himself the duty of the oversight of the Churches. Africa, which had so long opposed papal aggression, unable to fight longer, gave up its resistance; so did Illyricum. Gaul alone protested vehemently, in the person of Hilary, Archbishop of Arles. Celidonius, one of the Bishops under Hilary's jurisdiction, had been deposed by Hilary and appealed to Leo against Hilary's judgment. Leo decided in favour of Celidonius, and reversed the judgment. Hilary challenged Leo's right to take any action in the matter, and came himself to Rome, boldly asserting that the Pope had no authority whatever over his See, and that the papal action was therefore invalid. Finally, however, he had to leave Rome defeated, only escaping imprisonment by flight, and was deprived of the metropolitan jurisdiction belonging to his See.

Shortly after this, in 455, Leo finally established his position as head of the Western Church, by obtaining from the young Emperor of the West, Valentinian III, a civil enactment, giving him the

legal power to summon prelates from all provinces to abide his judgment, and making "every sort of resistance to the divinely established universal primacy of the Roman See an act of high treason." In this decree the primacy of Rome was based (1) on the primacy of Peter; (2) on the majesty of the city of Rome; and (3) on the authority of a Council.[1]

This was a step of epoch-making importance. Up to this time the Emperor had kept in his own hands the right of final decision in religious as in civil causes. By this decree, he, as it were, made the Bishop of Rome his partner, retaining civil jurisdiction for himself, but handing over spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the Pope.

But Leo was not only an ecclesiastic; he was also a theologian of no mean ability, as may be seen by the part he took in the Eutychian[2] controversy, which in his time almost rent Eastern Christianity in pieces. The letter which he wrote to Flavian on that occasion is masterly in its grasp of the theological situation. As a balanced and lucid statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation, avoiding on the one hand the Scylla of Nestorianism with its doctrine of the separation of the two natures, and on the other the Charybdis of Mono-

[1] Which Council was not stated; for the simple reason that no Council, not even that of Sardica, had ever recognised the Church of Rome as the ultimate seat of ecclesiastical or doctrinal authority.

[2] *Vide sup.* p. 78.

physitism with its doctrine of the absorption of Christ's humanity in His divinity, Leo's Tome (as it is called), was a theological masterpiece. It was accepted at the general Council of Chalcedon (A.D 451) as embodying the final decision of Christendom on the subject. This was done expressly on the ground of its conformity with the truth, and not out of deference to the See of Rome.[1] Nevertheless, that a doctrinal statement of a Bishop of Rome should be thus accepted in so important a controversy on account of even its intrinsic worth greatly enhanced the authority of Roman decisions in matters of orthodox belief.

Like Innocent I, Leo had to face the invasion of the barbarians. When Attila and his savage Huns appeared on the frontiers of Italy (A.D. 452) striking terror into every heart, and not least into that of the Emperor Victor III, who fled panic-stricken to Rome, it was Leo who dauntlessly faced the terrible king and prevailed on him to retire. Three years later (A.D. 455) when the Vandal Genseric advanced to the plunder of Rome, it was Leo once more who went to meet the invader. Unarmed and at the head of his clergy, he interceded with Genseric, and endeavoured to make terms for the city. He was unsuccessful in his brave attempt, but "all the more strikingly," after the sack of Rome was over, "did his ability

[1] At this Council the Patriarch of Constantinople was assigned co-equal and co-ordinate ecclesiastical authority with Rome.

display itself in restoring comfort and order amid scenes of unutterable destitution and confusion."

Leo stands forth not only as the spiritual shepherd of the people, but also as the representative, the protector, and saviour of the Roman people. Beside him the Emperor is but a shadow. "It was greatly owing to his commanding character that, whilst all signs of Roman dominion were crumbling away in Italy, the Church of Rome increased in majesty." [1]

Gregory I.—The Western Empire as such came to an end shortly after the death of Leo, and Rome was again nominally under the sway of the Emperor in Constantinople, but was actually for the most part fairly independent. The Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527–565) and his immediate successors, however, attempted to break down the independence of the Popes, and to treat them as entirely subject to the imperial pleasure; in fact, to deal with them as the Eastern Emperors had been accustomed to deal with the subservient Patriarchs of Constantinople. For a time he had his way, much to the detriment of the morale of the Papacy.

In A.D. 568 the Lombards invaded Italy, and the imperial power over Rome waned, while the attempts to subordinate city and Pope to the Exarch of Ravenna, the Emperor's representative in Italy, ceased. The devastation of the Lombards reduced Italy and Rome to a state of terrible

[1] Foakes Jackson, *Hist. of Christian Church*, p. 241.

destitution. The Emperor was in no position to send aid. When things were almost at their worst there was raised to the Papacy Gregory I (590–604), the greatest and most pious of the Popes. It fell to him to deal with the situation, for the Exarch was powerless. The See of Rome was by this time immensely rich in money and lands. Gregory bought off the Lombards with some of the wealth of the Church, and finally peace was concluded with them in A.D. 599.

In all these negotiations the Lombards dealt with him as with an independent secular prince. Gregory, therefore, may rightly be regarded as the first founder of the temporal power of the Papacy on Italian soil. He is the last of the great Church Fathers. With him early church history comes to a close, while, on the other hand, he is the first of the great mediæval churchmen. He stands indeed at the end of the old era and the beginning of the new.

Gregory was a man of wealth and learning and noble descent. Before he entered the Church he filled the office of prætor in Rome, which training stood him in good stead later on when he had to deal with the administration of the business of the Church. He certainly had remarkable capacity for the management of affairs. He had a genius for administration, and constantly displayed both foresight and forcefulness, mingled with tact and good sense. Unlike many of the ablest Popes, however, he was much more interested in the

spiritual duties of his vocation than in either the temporal or ecclesiastical affairs with which his position forced him to deal. Although he had the usual limitations of the age he lived in, and of his position (his mental horizon being bounded by the traditional ideas of his Church), and although he tended to "confound the kingdom of God with the reign of the Papacy," yet he was truly broad-minded at times, and wonderfully humble. His moral earnestness and deep piety would alone have made him great.

Like his distinguished predecessor, Leo I, he laid stress on the importance of preaching, and was no mean preacher himself. He was, besides, interested in church music,[1] and in the liturgical element in worship, whence he was called *magister cæremoniarum*. He also did not a little to reform his own clergy and to revive the spirit of Christianity and true religion in the Church. Gregory was governed by the conviction that on him, as the successor of St. Peter, devolved the oversight of the whole Church and its supreme guidance. "He advanced, indeed, no claims to authority beyond what had been asserted by his predecessors; yet the consistency, firmness, conscientious zeal, as well as address and judgment, with which he maintained it, and the waning of the power of the Eastern Empire, left him virtual ruler of Rome,

[1] He instituted a music-school in Rome and taught there himself.

and the sole power to whom the Western Church turned for support, and whom the Christianised barbarians, founders of the new kingdoms of Europe, regarded with reverence." [1]

Gregory protested vigorously against the assumption of the title "Universal Bishop" by the Patriarch of Constantinople, whom he held to be subject to the See of Rome; but, *mirabile dictu*, he also refused the title for himself when it was accorded him by the Bishop of Alexandria. "If you call me Universal Pope," said he, "you thereby own yourself no Pope." And he further made the statement, "I confidently say that whosoever calls himself Universal Bishop, or desires to be so called in his elation, is the forerunner of Antichrist."

The argument he used in dealing with the Patriarch of Constantinople shows something of the man's sincerity and spirituality, and comes strangely from a Pope of Rome. "Verily," he says, "when Paul heard that some said, 'I am of Paul; others, I am of Apollos; others, I am of Cephas,' he exclaimed, 'Was Paul crucified for you?' If, then, he could not tolerate that the members of the Lord's body should be arranged in parcels, as it were, and become attached to other heads than Christ, even though these heads were Apostles, what wilt thou say who, by assuming the title of 'universal,' seekest to subject all Christ's members to thyself? What wilt thou say to Him, the Head

[1] Barmby, *M.D.C.B.*

of the universal Church, at the final judgment? In truth, what is Peter . . . other than a member of the holy and universal Church? What are Paul, Andrew, and John, other than heads of single communities? And yet all subsist as members under the one only Head."

Gregory, in contrast, took for himself the title of "Servant of Servants," which title all his successors have borne; but they have also borne that other title, which he so Christianly condemned!

Gregory advanced the influence of his See beyond the shadowy limits of the Empire. Spain was brought under the sway of the Roman Church, and Gaul also was brought into closer connection with Rome than had heretofore been the case. Last, but not least, by Gregory's command and under his close supervision, Roman missionaries introduced Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons, and founded the English as distinct from the British or Scottish Church in this country. Gregory had what the "Friends" would call a "concern" for the evangelisation of the Anglo-Saxons. Before he became Pope he started to go as a missionary to them himself, but was brought back. His sustained interest in the doings of the missionaries whom he sent instead of himself, and his sympathetic enthusiasm for their work, proved that he had the true catholic and apostolic spirit in no small measure.

Herein he is representative of the best side of the Roman Church.

CHAPTER XII

IONA AND LINDISFARNE

Iona is neither a city, nor even a town, but nevertheless it was a representative centre of a distinct type of Christianity of no little importance—the Scottish, or, perhaps one should say—the Irish.

The Christian community on the little island of Hy, or Iona, was founded in A.D. 563 by Columba, or Columbkille, as he is called to distinguish him from his famous contemporary and fellow countryman of the same name, Columb(anus). Columba had come over from Ireland, then called Hibernia, or Scotia, to convert the wild inhabitants of North Britain, and with him he brought the particular type of Christianity which had been in existence there for a century and a half.

As by A.D. *c.* 300 Christianity was professed by the mass of the people in South Britain, and there was intercourse between the two islands, it is more than probable that there were some Christians in Ireland as early as the fourth century. Celestius, the companion of Pelagius, according to Jerome, was a monk and an Irishman; and even in the middle of the third century there are indications

that one of the kings there—Cormac—had forsaken the Paganism of the Druids.

But the first definite movement that we know of for the conversion of Ireland to Christianity was the mission of St. Patrick to that country, A.D. *c.* 405.

St. Patrick was a native of Brittany; both his father and grandfather were clerics. As a youth he was taken captive and carried to Ireland, where he spent some years in bondage. He says in his *Confessions*[1]: "I was sixteen years old, and I knew not the true God, but in a strange land the Lord brought me to a sense of my unbelief, so that, although late, I minded me of my sins, and turned with my whole heart to the Lord my God, who looked down on my lowliness, and had pity on my youth and ignorance."

Some years afterwards, as he relates, he had a vision of a man coming as if from Ireland with innumerable letters, one of which ran thus, "The voice of the people of Ireland," and, as he was reading aloud the beginning of the letter, he thought that at that very moment he heard the voice of those he had known when in Ireland crying out, "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still among us." At this, as he says, he was pricked to the heart, and could read no more, and so awoke.

He regarded this dream as an intimation that

[1] There is a copy of these, nearly a thousand years old, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

he must go as a missionary to Ireland; so, having been ordained as a Bishop, he set out, and spent the rest of his long life in preaching the gospel there.

Though he had many discouragements, and encountered no little opposition,[1] from some of the princes and kinglets as well as from the Druids, he met with extraordinary success. In his *Confessions* he says: "I am greatly a debtor to God, who has bestowed His grace so largely on me that multitudes should be born again to God through me, and that of these clergy should be everywhere ordained for a people lately coming to the faith."

It has been stated that there was an earlier missionary to Ireland, a monk named Palladius, who was sent to the Irish as their first Bishop by Celestine, the then Pope of Rome, and that Patrick was sent afterwards when Palladius failed in his task. But one of the interesting things about Irish Christianity is that originally it was quite independent of Rome and of papal claims.

The real story of Palladius's mission seems to have been this. When Patrick had been in Ireland nearly a quarter of a century, and the work of converting the country was going on apace, the fame of what was happening reached Celestine, who sent Palladius to Ireland to found a hierarchy

[1] "Daily I expected to be seized, to be carried into slavery, or killed" (*Conf.*).

there, which should be devoted to the papal interest and reap the fruits of St. Patrick's labours.[1]

The attempt proved a signal failure, and Palladius, after some months in Ireland, relinquished his enterprise and took his departure.

Patrick came of a very independent race. The Gallic clergy, and especially those of Brittany, had long resisted the claims of the Pope to jurisdiction over them, nor did they acknowledge a universal hierarchical system with Rome as its head.

Doubtless Patrick shared their views, preferring a church system of more primitive character. So when the papal agent arrived in Ireland, to forward the claims of the Pope, and to take the position of primate, it is not likely that he received a very cordial welcome from the stout-hearted Apostle of Ireland—in fact, he did not stay longer than he could help, and never came back.

It is a fact noteworthy in this connection that, for nearly two centuries after this date, though the Church of Ireland was admittedly in a very flourishing state, no further communications with it on the part of the Pope or any of the officials is known. The ecclesiastical polity and worship introduced by Patrick were in some ways different from the Roman. In his time there was no

[1] Prosper, who flourished in the fifth century, writes that, Palladius being ordained by Pope Celestine, was sent to *the Irish believing in Christ*, to be their first Bishop in 431.

The oldest Irish MS. records that "Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine with a Gospel for Patrick to preach it to the Irish."

image-worship nor invocation of the saints. Easter was kept at a different date from the Roman, while the tonsure of the Irish monks was quite unlike that of the Romanists. The two latter customs gave great offence at a later date, more apparently than any doctrinal differences. One striking feature about Patrick's ecclesiastical arrangements was the great number of Bishops he created—300 according to one authority,[1] 700 according to another.[2] In these same authorities the number of Churches he is said to have founded corresponds exactly to the number of Bishops. Evidently, then, every congregation had its own Bishop.[3] Irish bishoprics were then parochial or congregational, not diocesan, which was also to some extent the case in Brittany—an entirely different arrangement from that which obtained in Roman Christendom proper.

Patrick died in A.D. 465, but before his death the Irish Church began to receive not a few valuable reinforcements from Britain; for about A.D. 449 the Saxons began to invade England and to displace the native British, many of whom, as we have said, were Christian. Many of the British clergy seem to have taken refuge in Ireland, and thus added considerably to the strength and learning of the infant Church there.

[1] *Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland.*
[2] *Annals of the Four Masters.*
[3] This custom obtained as late as the ninth century.

In the early history of Irish Christianity one cannot but be struck by the prominence given to monastic institutions. In Patrick's day monasticism was becoming very popular in Christendom, and was highly recommended by many of the greatest and best men in the Church. It was in part a revolt against the growing worldliness of the Church, and an attempt to go back to the simplicity and poverty of apostolic times. As such, it commended itself to earnest-minded men with their minds set on seeking first the kingdom of God.

It would seem that Patrick was attracted by the monastic idea, and made much use of it in the church system which he introduced and arranged.

The idea was not a new one, however, even in Ireland, as there were similar institutions connected with Druidism, and it may be that the monasteries of the early Irish Church were really Christian modifications of these Druid institutions. And certain it is that not a few of them were connected with or founded near trees—generally oaks, the sacred trees of the Druids. (Kildare, *e.g.*, the famous nunnery of St. Brigid, means Church of the Oak. Dearmach, the principal monastery built by St. Columba in Ireland, means "Field of the Oaks.")

Although early Christianity in Ireland was free from the domination of the Roman Church, and was in certain respects more primitive, it certainly

incorporated some of the old superstitions and barbarous customs of the country, and was to a certain extent tinged with the customs of Druidism, especially perhaps in the monasteries and nunneries.

Many of these were, however, not monasteries in the modern sense of the word, but rather communities of people drawn together for regular devotional exercises and for purposes of religious study and education.[1] They were, in fact, religious settlements,[2] where men and women and young people were drawn together for the purpose of being built up in faith and knowledge, and of being equipped for Christian work and for the life of holiness. Not a few of them were mixed institutions, women's settlements side by side with men's. Many of the members of these communities lived in extempore huts, which they built for themselves round the central building, which was generally used both as a church and a lecture-hall.

In the first instance, the monks and nuns were not bound by irrevocable vows, though as a rule they came for a good length of time. In some cases whole clans were gathered into these religious and educational communities.

[1] These Christian educational institutions of the Irish Church in time gained a European reputation, and students from all parts of Europe flocked to Ireland to get the benefit of them. Not a few of their abbots were famous both for their scholarship and their piety.

[2] Not unlike "Woodbrooke" in England, and Northfield in U.S.A.

Generally, however, celibacy tended to become the rule, while not a few of the monks lived lives of marked asceticism,[1] which was evidently considered as the highest ideal. In some monasteries the discipline was exceedingly severe, but that does not seem to have been normal.

The most famous of the Irish churchmen of the sixth century was Columbkille, or Columba, of whom we have already spoken. For reasons which are variously stated, he left Ireland and turned his energies to the conversion of North Britain. With twelve companions, he made an adventurous journey across the sea in a currach of wicker-work covered with hides, and landed on Hy, a small island on the south-west extremity of Mull in Argyllshire.

There he founded a monastery and made it a centre from which he and his companions evangelised the Picts and also his brother Scots, though they already knew something of the gospel and were (some of them) nominally Christian.

Following up a plan of campaign like that adopted in the Christianising of Ireland, Columba made Iona the base of his operations, and from there founded communities for religious and theological learning and culture all over Scotland, or " North Britain " as it was called till long after this date.

[1] Ireland became famed for the number of its ascetics, and attempts were made from Ireland from time to time to introduce the rigour of the Irish discipline into the laxer continental religious houses.

Small groups of missionaries educated at the mother settlement at Iona, would go out into the wilds of Scotland, and in their turn would gather around them the unlettered and ignorant, not to say barbarous, Picts and Scots, and would instruct them in the faith and educate them in the Scriptures, as well as in other branches of knowledge. Much pioneer preaching was done as well, both from Iona and from these local centres; but the main strength of the movement lay in these educational mission-stations and theological schools themselves.

Columba had founded " monasteries " in Ireland before he left that country. These, together with the ones in North Britain, long remained subject to the jurisdiction of Iona and its Abbot. And what is more striking, even the Bishops, in North Britain at all events, were subject to the presbyter Abbot of Iona, a thing unheard of in Roman Christendom. Columba and his successors, together with their senior monks, regularly ordained Bishops and Presbyters (most of whom had been their own scholars); and even Kings were ordained by them. The heads of other monastic institutions in North Britain assumed the same prerogative, though subject to Iona. In fact, according to one eminent authority, " the whole ecclesiastical fabric of this Church was constructed on the monastic foundation, with its entire economy regulated by the discipline of conventual life . . . the office of Abbot

was the pinnacle of church preferment" (Reeves). These abbacies were often to some extent hereditary, or at least kept to one family.

"For some centuries," as has been said, "Iona remained the "centre of education, the asylum of religious knowledge, the point of union among the British Isles, the capital and necropolis of the Celtic race. During this time it retained an uncontested supremacy over all the monasteries and Churches of Caledonia, and over those of half Ireland" (Montalembert).

St. Columba died in A.D. 597, the very year that St. Augustine of Canterbury landed in the south of Britain, sent by Pope Gregory to convert the English.

Before leaving St. Columba, it is worth while quoting part of what the great Saxon historian Bede (writing about a century afterwards) had to say of him:

"When the successor of Justinian had the government of the Roman Empire there came into Britain a famous presbyter and abbot—a monk by habit and life, whose name was Columba—to preach the word of God to the provinces of the Northern Picts, who are separated from the southern parts by steep and rugged mountains. . . . Columba came into Britain in the ninth year of Bridius, a powerful King of the Pictish nation: and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ by his preaching and example, whereafter he

received from them the island [*i.e.* Iona] for a monastery. His successors hold it to this day: he was also buried therein, having died at the age of seventy-seven, about thirty-two years after he came into Britain to preach. . . . That island has for its ruler an Abbot who is a presbyter, to whose jurisdiction all the province, and even the Bishops, according to an unusual arrangement, are subject, after the example of their first teacher, who was not a Bishop but a presbyter and monk. . . . Whatever he was himself, this we know for certain, that he left successors renowned for their continency, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. They followed, it is true, uncertain rules in the observance of the great festival (Easter) by reason [charitable old Bede!] of their being so far away from the rest of the world." [1]

[1] Bede, *Eccles. Hist*, iii. 4.

CHAPTER XIII

IONA AND LINDISFARNE (*continued*)

IONA was not only the centre of Christianity in Caledonia, it was also intimately connected with the conversion of England, and at one time it seemed as if the Christianity of England would be of the same type as that which obtained farther north.

In earlier times, during the time of the Roman occupation, South Britain had gradually come to be Christian. We know this fact, although as regards detailed and certain information regarding the Christianity of this period we are sadly lacking. Probably the Britons had been Christianised gradually and almost imperceptibly through the Christians who were among the Roman garrisons and colonies in the land. There are occasional references to British Christians in the early Fathers, and evidently by the end of the third century the little British Church had taken its place, though an unimportant one, among the branches of the Christian Church.

In A.D 310 we find three of its Bishops (York, London, and Lincoln) representing the country at an

Episcopal Council at Arles in Gaul. And about half a century later, when another similar Council was held, the three British representatives had the proud distinction of being the only ones who were so poor that they had to take advantage of the Emperor's offer to provide hospitality for them at the public expense!

In A.D. 410 the Romans were obliged to withdraw the last of their legions from Britain.

When they were gone the Romanised Britons did their best to maintain their independence against the Picts and Scots, who had always given the Romans so much trouble, but with little success. The story goes that, in desperation, they called in the English to help them, and that the English turned against their employers, and overmastered them. In any case, it is certain that in the century and a half which followed the departure of the Romans, South Britain was overrun with Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who simply wiped out the British, so that hardly any trace of them remained except in the West, in Cornwall, and in the mountains of Wales, and perhaps a few in the Lake district. Except in these districts England became completely heathen once more, everything that was Christian being savagely destroyed, almost the only remnant of the ancient native British Church being amongst the unfortunate Britons who had taken refuge in Wales and Cornwall.[1]

[1] Even Wales and Cornwall were only partially Christian.

In 597 Augustine with about forty monks crossed over to Kent, the most civilised part of England, as the accredited missionary of Pope Gregory. He was successful in converting Ethelbert, the King of Kent, and in a few months he and his monks were busy baptizing thousands [1] of Ethelbert's subjects, who had promptly followed their King's example. Kent was turned Christian, and Augustine was made Archbishop of Canterbury. As one reads the story of the pomp and circumstance with which the Roman missionaries tried to impress the simple Saxons—the processions and solemn ritual—and notes the wholesale manner of conversion in so short a time, one cannot but compare the Roman missionary processes unfavourably with those of the Irish.

Gregory was overjoyed when he heard the news, and immediately sent a number of more monks to help on the work and begin to map out England into bishoprics. Among the new-comers were Mellitus, Paulinus, and Justus. They brought ecclesiastical vestments, sacred vessels, books, *relics*, and the pall of a metropolitan for Augustine himself, to make him independent of Gaul. An epistle from Gregory sketched out the course to be taken. London was to be Augustine's metropolitan See, and he was to consecrate twelve Bishops as suffragans. When Christianity extended to York, he was to place there also a metropolitan with twelve Bishops.

[1] Ten thousand at the first Christian festival!

As for the British Bishops, they were all entrusted to his care, "that the unlearned might be instructed, the weakened strengthened by persuasion, the perverse corrected with authority." [1]

Augustine soon came into collision with the British clergy when he came into the West of England, as he did in due course. The ritual of the native Church was challenged as not being in accord with the Roman methods. The overbearing arrogance of Augustine and his people astonished and irritated the British clergy. Some of the things he asked were reasonable enough, *e.g.* that they should join him in evangelising the heathen Anglo-Saxons, whom the British, somewhat naturally, hated; but the assumption of the Italian stranger that he was their spiritual overlord, and his attempts to dictate to them as to what they should and what they should not observe in the way of ritual and religious practices, were too much for the native clergy, who utterly refused to submit to him or to accede to his demands.

When King Ethelbert died the superficiality of Augustine's work, as might have been expected, soon showed itself, and in a very short time, except for the little district round Canterbury, South Britain was as heathen as ever.

North of the Humber, however, Edwin, the King of Northumbria, was converted to Christianity by his wife, Ethelburga, who was a daughter

[1] Bede, *Ecc. Hist.* i. 27.

of Ethelbert of Kent, and by Paulinus, an Italian monk who belonged to Augustine's mission, and had been sent in the train of the new queen. Edwin was baptized in a little wooden church which was built at York, which then once more became a Christian centre for a brief period. As in Kent, many of the King's nobles and subjects followed his example, and crowds were baptized. According to the tradition handed down by Bede, there was some sign that the Christian spirit was not altogether lacking in the nation's history during Edwin's reign. Paulinus, too, seems to have been altogether a more worthy type of missionary than Augustine, not so dependent on outward show and delegated authority. But the too easily propagated Christianity of the Italian missionary was destined very soon to collapse, even as had been the case in the south. Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, together with Cadwalla, a powerful Welsh prince (perhaps nominally a Christian), overthrew and slew Edwin at the battle of Hatfield (A.D. 633), and ravaged Northumbria. When Edwin died most of the Christianity of Northumbria died too, except for a little cluster of Christians at York under a brave deacon, who had held his ground there.

South Britain had then been twice Christianised, first gradually during the Roman occupation, and second superficially and nominally by Augustine and his monks.

It now required converting to Christianity once more. This time it was done thoroughly, and, except for the extreme south, the credit is due to Scottish monks of Iona and their disciples.

Edwin of Northumbria was succeeded after a time by Oswald, who had spent many years at the monastery of Iona, and there had learned to love the monks and to share their simple faith.

When he came to his kingdom, and found how its Christianity, such as it was, had been beaten down and had almost disappeared, he sent to Iona begging for a missionary to be sent to his people. They sent him Aidan, a man of exemplary piety. who laboured for sixteen years with wonderful success among the people of Northumbria, wandering about on foot from the Forth to the Humber, preaching the gospel. Bede, who, though he did not agree with some of his tenets, could not but admire him, says of him: "He left his clergy a most wholesome example of abstinence and continence, and the highest commendation of his teaching was that his own life corresponded with it." [1]

King Oswald, who was a good example of what Christianity could do for a man and a king, gave him all the help he could and acted as his interpreter when first he came to Northumbria, thus proving himself a worthy member of the famous brotherhood at Iona.

[1] Bede, *H.E.* iii. 5.

True to the traditions of Iona, Aidan made his headquarters on a lonely island—Lindisfarne,[1] where he founded a monastery and gathered about him there some monks and scholars. Many Scottish monks and clergy followed him from Scotland. Here and there over the kingdom, just as Columba had done, he founded religious educational communities, which he put into the charge of Scottish monks. He himself took a personal part in the work of education, which he deemed so important, and was the instructor of many, including the great St. Hilda, who later became Abbess of Whitby.

It is recorded of him that " all who accompanied him, whether monks or laymen, were under obligation to meditate, *i.e.* to read the Scriptures, or learn the Psalter."

King Oswald was killed (A.D. 642) in battle with Penda, King of Mercia; but his death made no difference to the advance of Christianity in his realms, firmly founded as it was now becoming.

Aidan died some nine years later (651), having seen his work grow and prosper under his hands. He was succeeded by Finan of Iona. King Oswald was succeeded by his brother Oswy, who for the first nine years of his reign divided his rule with Oswin. Oswy, though professedly a Christian, murdered Oswin a few days before Aidan's death.

From Northumbria, and with the help of both

[1] Now known as Holy Island. It is off the coast of Northumberland, about nine miles south-east of Berwick-on-Tweed.

Oswy and his predecessor Oswald, Christianity spread southward.

Conversion of South Britain.—Oswald had assisted in the conversion of *Wessex*, though this kingdom was not otherwise the fruit of Northumbrian or "Ionan" missionary labours. It was, however, at first, principally worked by Scoto-Irish missionaries.

South of Northumbria was the great heathen kingdom of *Mercia*, under King Penda, adjoining which on the east was the kingdom of the *Middle Angles*, under his son Peada, which two kingdoms practically comprehended the whole of the Midlands. Eastward of these was the kingdom of *East Anglia* on the north and *Essex* on the south, including London. A year or two after Aidan's death these more southerly districts began to be affected by the Christianity from the north.

Peada, the son of that inveterate old heathen, Penda, married a Christian wife, Oswy's daughter, and was himself baptized. He took back with him four missionaries, monks from Lindisfarne, to convert his own people, the Middle Angles.

These had great success in their work, and were even allowed (or rather not forbidden) to preach in Penda's kingdom of Mercia. The old King indeed is said to have insisted that, if any of his subjects became Christians, they would have to live as such. Like some other anti-Christians, he was no advocate of nominal Christianity!

Meanwhile Sigbert, the King of the East Saxons, had been persuaded by Oswy to embrace Christianity. (Whatever else one may say of Oswy, he was a zealous proselytiser.) He was a great friend of Oswy's, and Bede tells how that King instructed him in the faith when he came to visit him in Northumbria. At his earnest request, one of the missionaries to the Middle Angles, Cedda by name, one of Aidan's disciples, was sent to instruct the East Saxons in Christianity. Under Cedda and his assistants, who were indefatigable in their labours, the work of converting the East Saxons went on apace. Cedda was the second Apostle of this kingdom. The first was connected with the Canterbury mission, but his work was ephemeral. Cedda, together with his assistants, was, however, the instrument of the permanent conversion of the people of Essex.

The great kingdom of Mercia, though hitherto stoutly heathen, was not long behind Middle Anglia and Essex in accepting Christianity. Penda was killed in battle by Oswy, and his kingdom was partly annexed to Northumbria and part given to Penda's Christian son, Peada. Though this arrangement did not last long it gave Christianity a good start, and from that time onwards it was recognised in Mercia. Its missionaries and first Bishops were all old Lindisfarne and Iona men, the last of whom was Cheadda, or Chad,[1] a brother

[1] Founder of Lichfield Cathedral.

of Cedda's and one of Aidan's disciples. Chad died in 672.

From what has been said we can see what a large section of England owed its permanent conversion to the monks of Iona and of Lindisfarne, which faithfully carried on the tradition of Iona. Roughly speaking, with the exception of the small kingdom of East Anglia, England, north of a line drawn from Bristol to London, was converted by the labours of the "Ionan" monks and their Northumbrian pupils. Even south of this line there was a Scottish mission in Sussex, while Ireland and Northumbria had had not a little to do with the conversion of Wessex.

The type of ecclesiastical polity that prevailed was similar to the early Irish. Little stress was laid on Episcopacy, which took quite a secondary place; much stress was laid upon religious instruction, and the establishment of religious and educational communities, as being the surest and most permanent Christianising agencies.

The attitude of the monks and clergy was non-Roman. They preferred their own customs, and, in so far as they were interested in ecclesiastical politics, resented the interference and the claims of Rome.

The Synod of Whitby (A.D 664).—The distinctive influence of Iona was soon to come to an end. The Roman missionaries in the south and in East Anglia began to clash with the Celtic missionaries,

especially on the question of the date of Easter. The Roman missionaries and their adherents seem to have been more interested and energetic in converting the English Christians to Roman usages and bringing the land into subjection to the Pope than they were in converting the people from heathenism. Certain it is that they were more successful in the former than in the latter.

To make a long story short, King Oswy in 664 convened a Synod to discuss the matter at Whitby.

The chief figures were King Oswy, Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who followed Finan, Aidan's successor, Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, and Cedda of Essex, who favoured the Scottish usage. On the other side were Wilfred, an ambitious Northumbrian monk, who had been educated in Rome, and was the leader of the Roman party, Alfred, Oswy's son, a pupil of Wilfred's, and Agilbert, the Bishop of far-off Wessex.

In the Council, to quote the words of Fuller, the old historian, after much arguing pro and con, "Wilfred at last knocked down all with this argument: that the Romish celebration of Easter was founded on the practice of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, and porter of heaven."

King Oswy, hearing this, was affrighted, who had rather anger all the other eleven Apostles than offend St. Peter, one so high in power and place, for fear lest, coming to heaven's gate, St. Peter should deny him a "cast of his office, and refuse

to let him in to happiness." Wilfred had urged that the Roman Church was derived from Peter himself, to whom Christ had given the keys of heaven. Oswy appealed to Colman as to whether any such power had been given to Columba. "None," said the Bishop. "Then," said the King: "I dare no longer contradict the decrees of him who keeps the doors of the kingdom of heaven, lest he should refuse me admission." [1]

Colman was naturally angry that so slight an argument had made so deep an impression on the King's credulity.

But that was of no avail, and the assembly agreed then and there to renounce their former position and conform to the Roman observance. Henceforth the Christian Church of England became fixed as one of the branches of the Church of Rome. Colman and many of his followers left England and went back to Iona. Some of the other Scottish missionaries gave in (*e.g.* Cedd and Cedda, Hilda, etc.). But from that time forth Scottish monks ceased to labour in England, and those who were left soon died out, while those of the Roman party entered into the fruit of their labours.

[1] Bede, *H.E.* iii. 25.

EPILOGUE [1]

It is possible to read history in either of two ways. We can read it as the record of external happenings; we can also read it as the record of the strivings of the human spirit to realise itself. To read it in the former way may engage our hours with interest, but not for very long. Our souls are bound to ask, at length, the meaning of this maze of events; it is when we begin to do this that we begin to read history in the second way, and it is then alone that history becomes profitable. So we may well ask, after viewing cities long since ruined, and calling up from the silence voices that once strove earnestly, What was it that produced this earnestness? If one city or one race had been touched, the question would not be so difficult to answer—it might not be the concern of our common humanity. But, as we have seen, many races are touched: Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, Constantinople, Rome, may differ, but they differ because they concentrate intensely upon the same problem, and concentrate, not for intellectual reasons only, but because it is a living and vital

[1] Contributed by the Rev. W. Fearon Halliday, M.A.

matter. But, though they differ widely, the observer can see many points of unity. An overmastering influence has awakened their spirits, a common devotion is behind their efforts; it is this devotion of heart that makes them so fiercely antagonistic when they differ, and their differences often prove the intense way in which their souls were stirred.

But, further, the thoughts of these men have altered the life of the Western world. They died with their problem unsolved, and that unsolved problem is still our problem to-day, and still men of different race bend all their energies to its solution. We may well ask, What does this mean? It means that He who is the cause of all this thought and labour, to whom so many different ones turn in devotion, for whom not only the learned but the poor have lived and died, is greater than all. He stands over Jerusalem, but over Alexandria also; and not only over Alexandria, but over Antioch and Rome, and sea-girt Iona, arresting and captivating men; and, though some of these cities are long since dust, He lives to-day. And we, still captivated, labour, for in Him we feel there is the secret of life. The one who has so powerfully awakened the human soul, and so wonderfully evoked the progress of generations, must be greater than those whom He has awakened, and mightier than those who died, whilst still following on to know Him. And so we affirm that, in

whatever way we define Divinity, and however much our conceptions differ, He who is too great for our poor thought, too loving for our hearts to understand, is the Son of God, through whom not only we, but all things, consist. To Him be the glory for ever and ever.

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